WHIST OF THE FUTURE

LOWSLEY.

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1906

WHIST OF THE FUTURE

WHIST OF THE FUTURE

BEING A FORECAST

SUBMITTING DEFECTS IN EXISTING
WHIST LAWS;
CONTAINING ARGUMENT
AGAINST THE AMERICAN LEADS
BEING APPLICABLE TO STRONG HANDS AND
WEAK HANDS ALIKE; AND ADVOCATING WITH
OTHER MATTERS THE ADOPTION OF THE SAME GAME
AND THE SAME LAWS FOR ALL COUNTRIES, SO
THAT INTERNATIONAL WHIST TOURNAMENTS,
ON THE DUPLICATE SYSTEM, MAY BE-
COME PRACTICABLE AND
FREQUENT.

BY

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL B. LOWSLEY

(Retired) Royal Engineers

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WHIST OF THE FUTURE.

SPECIAL NOTIFICATION.

In a Notice of this Book which was inserted in *The Field* newspaper of the 5th February, 1898, there was a misrepresentation as regards the author's forecast of WHIST OF THE FUTURE.

In order that the wrong impression conveyed might to some extent be rectified, the letter given below was sent for insertion in *The Field* newspaper.

A WHIST FORECAST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FIELD."

SIR,—In your notice of my Book WHIST OF THE FUTURE in *The Field* dated 5th February, 1898, you state that I advance, at p. 65, "The Whist of the Future is to "be a game of intellectual enjoyment as qualified by "luck."

I deny that I gave any such definition of Whist of the future, or that there is any paragraph in my Book which warrants such a deduction.

What I do say at p. 65, after quoting the authority of Mr. R. F. Foster, is :—

"The above note of Mr. Foster's decisively confirms "the important point which I would now submit: *i.e.*, "That if Whist of the future is to be a game of intel- "lectual *enjoyment* as qualified by *luck*, there must be less "consideration given to the signallings and attempted "calculations supposed to be gleaned therefrom."

There is plainly here no attempt whatever to *define* "Whist of the Future" as advanced in your notice of the

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Book, and you have put inverted commas wrongfully to wording which is not given by me.

The whole of my work leads up to the important considerations affecting Whist of the future and the definite conclusion is thus given at p. 161 :—

"Perhaps a new system of play will be the outcome of "those which now exist, it may be a compromise. It "may have the simple old leads as the opening ones of "the hand, because these contain no excess of information "which would invite and involve disaster when the com- "bined hands might turn out to be weak. It may also "embody the main principle of American Leads (*viz., to "show the length and strength of the suit to the utmost*), for use "*only* at the stage of the play when the combined strength "has been ascertained to be sufficient to give prospect of "long suit establishment and *bringing in*."

The above, which is given at the close of the work, will plainly show that what you have been pleased to quote as *my definition* of Whist of the future was unwarranted.

After the above exposure of the inaccuracy of your notice, I will add that in other cases also, where extracts are cited with disparagement, the perusal of the arguments I have advanced in my Work would alter the impressions conveyed by your Review.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

B. LOWSLEY,
Author of "Whist of the Future."

SOUTHSEA,
7th February, 1898.

The above letter was not inserted in *The Field* newspaper, and a second communication sent under registered enclosure, drawing attention to the omission, and to the damage caused to the work by the misleading statement, was unnoticed.

My readers have my Book submitted to their consideration, and will be able to judge as to the fairness or otherwise of *The Field* review.

THE AUTHOR.

Preface

THE existing works on the Game of Whist leave no necessity nor room for another treatise in the lines which have generally been followed.

But the American system of leads at present in favour, beautiful as it is in its precision, is not a system of finality, and will in due course be supplanted by strategy which is not when the combined hands are weak so seriously open to attack.

The reasons for this conclusion are fully submitted, and suggestions are made as regards modifications.

Each succeeding school of Whist is apt to look on the one which has preceded it as of comparatively poor account; fresh systems, or developments of former ones, will be inaugurated as long as the Whist World lasts, such is the infinite scope afforded by the conditions of the game.

No apology for what is advanced is necessary, for our American kinsmen always welcome honest criticism, and give to adverse argument an earnest and impartial consideration.

American Whist is not so hard *to learn* as at first sight it would appear to be, but in actual play strong brains are required for drawing correct deductions, and for making applications judiciously.

But Whist, as a game of luck influenced by perception, requires tentative development in the earlier leads rather than the immediate utmost exhibition of capabilities to friend and foe alike.

The unreserved declaration of length and strength of suit can only be of advantage when the aid given by one's partner will fully counterbalance the damage likely to arise from attacks. Therefore the extent of detail to be openly announced should wholly depend on the distribution of strength.

There are three cases for consideration :—

When holding greatly superior strength, partners may with advantage convey by their play the utmost information possible, and thus gain a more crushing victory.

When holding strength equal to that of their opponents, partners should be more reticent, and should give information only to the limited extent required for immediate success or for very promising tactics; they should carefully keep back Reserves required to meet the counter attacks.

With weakness the *combined game* consists in the partners seizing such opportunities as may come to them individually or otherwise. Any attempt at complete informatory combination analogous to that which is advantageous to their powerful adversaries would but present their weak array in a consolidated form most suitable for annihilation.

Cavendish seems to lend support to the above-named provisions when he lays down "The Modern System of Leading (*i.e.* the American system) should be abandoned when an opponent has shown such strength in trumps that it is not advisable for you to let him count your hand precisely." From this it might fairly be inferred that *the modern system of lead should not be started when the weakness of the hand may render it probable that the opponents in combination are the stronger side.*

What then is the best *general* method of opening the *combined game?* One is at first quite ignorant as to the nature of the support his partner may give; yet the first lead must of course be intelligible to him, and it should be from the strongest suit, because that is the suit in which one could generally obtain early successes, and also in which he would be able, later in the hand, to win tricks, should trump strength be found to be favourable.

This old-time long-suit lead is excellent if it remains pretty much as it has stood for a century and a half, but it is rendered unsound when hampered by number-showing developments which are as likely to turn to the benefit of the opponents as they are to the good of the *combined game.*

Dr. Pole has said, in his *Theory of Whist*: "Many players do not pay so much attention to their opponents' as to their partner's indications." In *Whist of the Future*, it will be an essential that, when weak, partners shall take especial care to miss nothing of the hostile announcements; the saving of a game will often depend entirely upon this.

With other matters, attention is drawn to some blemishes in the present *Laws of the Game*, with a hope for amendments in the code of *Whist of the Future.*

THE AUTHOR.

SOUTHSEA.

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WHIST OF THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTORY

OUR great English authorities on whist, *Hoyle*, *Matthews*, *Pole*, *Clay*, *Cavendish*, *Mogul*, *Drayson*, *Whitfeld*, and last, but not least, *Pembridge*, are now supplemented by American writers of the highest intellectual whist power — *Hamilton*, *Work*, *Trist*, *Coffin*, *Ames*, *Howell*, *Foster*, and Miss *Kate Wheelock*, taking a high rank amongst these.

The Americans have set themselves to work on the development of the game with the vigour they show in all they undertake.

Many English players are not prepared wholly to frame their system of play upon the innovations announced from across the Atlantic. But they must be careful that they do not fall *behind the times*.

The American average players would at the present time probably beat our average players in matches, simply because we do not promptly and thoroughly master all they are perfecting and originating, *and because we have not sufficiently*

studied the modes of attack to which their informatory leads and signals are specially open. In England we have no periodical *Whist Literature.* The *Field* newspaper almost alone has columns for *Cards*, answers Whist Queries, and inserts exhaustive articles, correspondence, and specimen hands, etc.

But in America very many of the leading newspapers devote pages to the game, and the monthly magazine *Whist*, published by the Whist Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is, both in get-up and subject matter, as tasteful and sound as any periodical in the world which treats of pastimes or sciences. In England we shall remain behindhand if we have not amongst us sufficient energy and enterprise to start an equally high-class Whist magazine.

There has not hitherto been made a parallel comparison of the English and American Laws of Whist. In supplying this, I have subsequently submitted notes on points which may be for rectification when an International Code shall be under consideration.

The chapter on *Bad Habits at Whist* will generally be applicable only to those who have not frequently had the advantage of playing with others who are accomplished.

But we all sometimes observe cases of mannerism or of vagaries even amongst those who should know better, and the attempt to draw attention to some of the most obnoxious of these may be

beneficial. The Americans set us a fine example as regards suppression of bad Whist habits.

In all matches we shall have to adopt *Duplicate Whist*. We may not for this perhaps do better than accept the existing well-organized American arrangements.

A very large proportion of our leading men—whether political, professional, naval or military—recognise fully the importance of sound play in Whist and Chess. They see that good players in such games are, wherever they may be serving, of higher social value, and perhaps of higher intellectual capacity, than are those versed only in the examination subjects which are rarely required to the front except for examination purposes.

Dr. Pole records that a great man has said: "In choosing a Prime Minister, his Whist-playing would offer a sufficient test of his competency." Undoubtedly a good Whist-player is always a man of great ability, and there could hardly be shown any better all-round qualification than proficiency in our national games. I venture to hope that the day may soon come when these shall generally be included in an examination curriculum.

Indeed, the Americans have taken the initiative in the lines indicated.

I have before me an American newspaper, stating that Whist is now made a subject of instruction in some schools in New York, and that it is found most effective in developing mathematical and deductive powers.

The formation of an English Whist League with an administrative staff must be preliminary to an International Whist Congress.

In America there are professional teachers of the game, and in England we should do well to encourage a like institution. The time may not be far off when those who desire to become good players will deem it essential to commence by undergoing a course of lessons, and when their teachers will have been required to qualify by passing a searching examination under arrangements inaugurated by our National Whist Council, before they are granted Diplomas.

Revived and increased popularity for Whist would be ensured if English Ladies might take it up with something of the fervour shown by American Ladies; skill in the game by them would indeed be an additional intellectual attraction.

I trust that the argument I have advanced as regards the American Leads and Signals being often badly open to well-judged opposition tactics, may induce players of high Whist perception to study the attack rather than adopt or devise ramifications to the over-informatory system.

It will doubtless always be a very great comfort to have partners who adopt the full-information programme. You often hear such complaints as, "How could I tell that you held such-and-such a card?" but never, "You made the contents of your hand too patent by your method of play!" It is pleasant to be protected by the Partner's

open declarations in play from the chance of your strategy clashing with his, and it is a luxury that your game may thus be so smoothed that you can yourself do no wrong; but with observant and strong opponents who are taking careful note of your regulation arrangements there will very often happen trick-losing results.

CHAPTER I

A parallel comparison between the Laws of English Short Whist and the Laws of American Whist.

THE laws of both nations are given below in full, the English laws standing in their numerical sequence, and the American laws transposed, each one being put opposite to the English law which has bearing on a similar issue.

THE LAWS OF ENGLISH SHORT WHIST.	THE LAWS OF AMERICAN WHIST.
THE RUBBER.	**THE GAME.**
1. The rubber is the best of three games. If the first two games be won by the same players, the third game is not played.	1. A game consists of seven points, each trick above six counting one. The value of the game is determined by deducting the loser's score from seven.
SCORING.	
2. A game consists of five points. Each trick above six counts one point.	See American Law No. 1.
3. Honours, *i.e.* ace, king, queen and knave of trumps, are thus reckoned:— If a player and his partner	No American Law ; the Americans not allowing honours to score.

either separately or conjointly, hold—

I. The four honours they score four points.
II. Any three honours they score two points.
III. Only two honours they do not score.

4. Those players, who, at the commencement of a deal, are at the score of four, cannot score honours.

No American Law.

5. The penalty for a revoke takes precedence of all other scores. Tricks score next, honours last.

See American Law No. 30.

6. Honours, unless claimed before the trump card of the following deal is turned up, cannot be scored.

No American Law.

7. To score honours is not sufficient; they must be called at the end of the hand; if so called, they may be scored at any time during the game.

No American Law.

8. The winners gain,—

See American Law No. 1.

I. A treble, or game of three points when their adversaries have not scored.
II. A double, or game of two points when their adversaries have scored less than three.
III. A single, or game of one point when their adversaries have scored three or four.

9. The winners of the rubber gain two points, commonly called the rubber points, in addition to the value of their games.	No American Law.
10. Should the rubber have consisted of three games, the value of the losers' game is deducted from the gross number of points gained by their opponents.	No American Law.
11. If an erroneous score be proved, such a mistake can be corrected prior to the conclusion of the game in which it occurred, and such game is not concluded until the trump card of the following deal has been turned up.	No American Law.
12. If an erroneous score affecting the amount of the rubber be proved, such mistake can be rectified at any time during the rubber.	No American Law.
CUTTING.	**CUTTING.**
13. The ace is the lowest card.	7. In cutting, the ace is the lowest card. All must cut from the same pack. If a player exposes more than one card, he must cut again. Drawing cards from the outspread pack may be resorted to in place of cutting.
14. In all cases, every one must cut from the same pack.	See American Law No. 7.

15. Should a player expose more than one card, he must cut again.

See American Law No. 7.

FORMATION OF TABLE.

16. If there are more than four candidates, the players are selected by cutting, those first in the room having the preference. The four who cut the lowest cards play first, and again cut to decide on partners; the two lowest play against the two highest, the lowest is the dealer, who has choice of cards and seats, and having once made his selection must abide by it.

FORMING THE TABLE.

2. Those first in the room have the preference. If by reason of two or more arriving at the same time more than four assemble, the preference among the last comers is determined by cutting, a lower cut giving the preference over all cutting higher. A complete table consists of six, the four having the preference play. Partners are determined by cutting, the highest two play against the lowest two; the lowest deals, and has the choice of seats and cards.

17. When there are more than six candidates, those who cut the two next lowest cards belong to the table, which is complete with six players; on the retirement of one of these six players the candidate who cut the next lowest card has a prior right to any after-comer to enter the table.

See American Law No. 2.

CUTTING CARDS OF EQUAL VALUE.

18. Two players cutting cards of equal value, unless

3. If two players cut intermediate cards of equal

such cards are the two highest, cut again; should they be the two lowest, a fresh cut is necessary to decide which of the two deals.

19. Three players cutting cards of equal value cut again; should the fourth (or remaining) card be the highest, the two lowest of the new cut are partners, the lower of these two the dealer; should the fourth card be the lowest, the two highest are partners, the original lowest the dealer.

value, they cut again; the lower of the new cut plays with the original lowest.

4. If three players cut cards of equal value, they cut again. If the fourth has cut the highest card, the lowest two of the new cut are partners and the lowest deals. If the fourth has cut the lowest card, he deals, and the highest two of the new cut are partners.

CUTTING OUT.

20. At the end of a rubber, should admission be claimed by any one or two candidates, he who has, or they who have, played a greater number of consecutive rubbers than the others, is, or are, out; but when all have played the same number they must cut to decide upon the outgoers; the highest are out.

5. At the end of a game, if there are more than four belonging to a table, a sufficient number of the players retire to admit those awaiting their turn to play. In determining which players remain in, those who have played a less number of consecutive games have the preference over all who have played a greater number; between two or more who have played an equal number the preference is determined by cutting, a lower cut giving the preference over all cutting higher.

ENTRY AND RE-ENTRY.

21. A candidate wishing to enter a table must declare such intention prior to any of the players having cut a card either for the purpose of commencing a fresh rubber or of cutting out.

6. To entitle one to enter a table he must declare his intention to do so before any one of the players has cut for the purpose of commencing a new game or of cutting out.

22. In the formation of fresh tables, those candidates who have neither belonged to nor played at any other table have the prior right of entry; the others decide their right of admission by cutting.

See American Law No. 5.

23. Any one quitting a table prior to the conclusion of a rubber may, with the consent of the other three players, appoint a substitute in his absence during that rubber.

No American Law.

24. A player cutting into one table, while belonging to another, loses his right of re-entry into that latter, and takes his chance of cutting in as if he were a fresh candidate.

No American Law.

25. If any one break up a table, the remaining players have the prior right to him of entry into any other; and should there not be sufficient vacancies at such other tables to admit all these

No American Law.

candidates, they settle their precedence by cutting.

SHUFFLING.

26. The pack must neither be shuffled below the table, nor so that the face of any card can be seen.

27. The pack must not be shuffled during the play of the hand.

28. A pack, having been played with, must neither be shuffled by dealing it into packets nor across the table.

29. Each player has a right to shuffle once only, except as provided by Rule 32, prior to a deal, after a false cut, or when a new deal has occurred.

30. The dealer's partner must collect the cards for the ensuing deal, and has the first right to shuffle that pack.

31. Each player, after shuffling, must place the cards, properly collected and face downwards, to the left of the player about to deal.

32. The dealer has always the right to shuffle last, but should a card or cards be seen during his shuffling, or while giving the pack to be cut, he may be compelled to re shuffle.

SHUFFLING.

9. A pack must not be shuffled during the play of a hand, nor so as to expose the face of any card.

See American Law No. 9.

8. Before every deal the cards must be shuffled. When two packs are used, the dealer's partner must collect and shuffle the cards for the ensuing deal, and place them at his right hand. In all cases the dealer may shuffle last.

See American Law No. 8.

See Amertcan Law No. 8.

See American Laws Nos. 8 and 9.

THE DEAL.

33. Each player deals in his turn; the right of dealing goes to the left.

34. The player on the dealer's right cuts the pack, and in dividing it must not leave fewer than four cards in either packet; if in cutting, or in replacing one of the two packets on the other, a card be exposed, or if there be any confusion of the cards, or a doubt as to the exact place in which the pack was divided, there must be a fresh cut.

CUTTING TO THE DEALER.

10. The dealer must present the pack to his right-hand adversary to be cut; the adversary must take a portion from the top of the pack and place it towards the dealer; at least four cards must be left in each packet; the dealer must reunite the packets by placing the one not removed in cutting upon the other.

See also American Law No. 13.

11. If, in cutting or reuniting the separate packets, a card is exposed, the pack must be re-shuffled by the dealer and cut again. If there is any confusion of the cards or doubt as to the place where the pack was separated, there must be a new cut.

13. When the pack has been properly cut and reunited, the dealer must distribute the cards, one at a time, to each player in regular rotation, beginning at his left; the last, which is the trump card, must be turned up before the dealer. At the end of the hand, or when the deal is lost, the deal passes to the player

next to the dealer on his left, and so on to each in turn.

See American Law No. 13.

35. When the player whose duty it is to cut has once separated the pack, he cannot alter his intention; he can neither re-shuffle nor re-cut the cards.

36. When the pack is cut, should the dealer shuffle the cards, he loses his deal.

12. If the dealer re-shuffles the pack after it has been properly cut, he loses his deal.

A NEW DEAL.

37. There must be a new deal—

I. If during a deal, or during the play of a hand, the pack be proved incorrect or imperfect.

II. If any card excepting the last be faced in the pack.

14. There must be a new deal by the same dealer—

I. If any card except the last is faced in the pack.

II. If during the deal or during the play of the hand, the pack is proved incorrect or imperfect; but any prior score made with that pack shall stand.

38. If while dealing a card be exposed by the dealer or his partner, should neither of the adversaries have touched the cards, the latter can claim a new deal; a card exposed by either adversary gives that claim to the dealer, provided that his partner has not touched a card; if a new deal does not take place, the exposed card cannot be called.

15. If during the deal a card is exposed, the side not in fault may demand a new deal—provided neither of that side has touched a card. If a new deal does not take place the exposed card is not liable to be called.

39. If during dealing a player touch any of his cards, the adversaries may do the same without losing their privilege of claiming a new deal, should chance give them such option.

See American Law No. 15.

40. If in dealing one of the last cards be exposed, and the dealer turn up the trump before there is reasonable time for his adversaries to decide as to a fresh deal, they do not thereby lose their privilege.

No American Law.

41. If a player, whilst dealing, look at the trump card, his adversaries have a right to see it, and may exact a new deal.

See American Law No. 17, Sect. V., whereby the looking at the trump card by the dealer constitutes a *misdeal.*

42. If a player take into the hand dealt to him a card belonging to the other pack, the adversaries, on discovery of the error, may decide whether they will have a fresh deal or not.

See American Law No. 19, opposite English Law, No. 69.

A MISDEAL.

43. A misdeal loses the deal.

44. It is a misdeal—

I. Unless the cards are dealt into four packets, one at a time in regular rotation, beginning with the player to the dealer's left.

MISDEALING.

17. It is a misdeal—

I. If the dealer omits to have the pack cut, and his adversaries discover the error before the trump card is turned and before looking at any of their cards.

II. Should the dealer place the last card (*i.e.* the trump) face downwards, on his own or any other pack.

III. Should the trump card not come in its regular order to the dealer; but he does not lose his deal if the pack be proved imperfect.

IV. Should a player have fourteen cards, and either of the other three less than thirteen.

V. Should the dealer, under an impression that he has made a mistake, either count the cards on the table or the remainder of the pack.

VI. Should the dealer deal two cards at once, or two cards to the same hand, and then deal a third; but if prior to dealing that third card the dealer can, by altering the position of one card only, rectify such error, he may do so, except as provided by the second paragraph of this law.

VII. Should the dealer omit to have the pack cut to him, and the adversaries discover the error, prior to the trump card being turned up, and before looking at their cards, but not after having done so.

45. A misdeal does not lose the deal, if, during the dealing, either of the adversaries touch the cards prior to the dealer's partner having done

II. If he deals a card incorrectly, and fails to correct the error before dealing another.

III. If he counts the cards on the table or in the remainder of the pack.

IV. If, having a perfect pack, he does not deal to each player the proper number of cards, and the error is discovered before all have played to the first trick.

V. If he looks at the trump card before the deal is completed.

VI. If he places the trump card face downwards upon his own or any other player's cards. A misdeal loses the deal, unless during the deal either of the adversaries touches a card or in any other manner interrupts the dealer.

See American Law No. 17, Sect. VI.; and American Law No. 15.

so; but should the latter have first interfered with the cards, notwithstanding either or both of the adversaries have subsequently done the same, the deal is lost.

46. Should three players have their right number of cards, the fourth have less than thirteen, and not discover such deficiency until he has played any of his cards, the deal stands good; should he have played, he is as answerable for any revoke he may have made as if the missing card or cards had been in his hand; he may search the other pack for it, or them.

See American Law No. 19, opposite English Law No. 69.

47. If a pack, during or after a rubber, be proved incorrect or imperfect, such proof does not alter any past score, game or rubber; that hand in which the imperfection was detected is null and void; the dealer deals again.

See American Law No. 14, Sect. II., placed opposite English Law No. 37.

48. Any one dealing out of turn or with the adversary's cards, may be stopped before the trump card is turned up, after which the game must proceed as if no mistake had been made.

16. Any one dealing out of turn or with his adversaries' pack may be stopped before the trump card is turned, after which the deal is valid, and the packs, if changed, so remain.

49. A player can neither shuffle, cut nor deal for his

No American Law.

partner without the permission of his opponents.

50. If the adversaries interrupt a dealer while dealing, either by questioning the score or asserting that it is not his deal, and fail to establish such claim, should a misdeal occur, he may deal again.

No American Law.

51. Should a player take his partner's deal, and misdeal, the latter is liable to the usual penalty, and the adversary next in rotation to the player who ought to have dealt then deals.

No American Law.

THE TRUMP CARD.

52. The dealer, when it is his turn to play to the first trick, should take the trump card into his hand; if left on the table after the first trick be turned and quitted, it is liable to be called; his partner may at any time remind him of the liability.

53. After the dealer has taken the trump card into his hand it cannot be asked for; a player naming it at any time during the play of that hand is liable to have his highest or lowest trump called.

18. The dealer must leave the trump card face upwards on the table until it is his turn to play to the first trick. If it is left on the table until after the second trick has been turned and quitted, it is liable to be called. After it has been lawfully taken up it must not be named, and any player naming it is liable to have his highest or his lowest trump called by either adversary. A player may, however, ask what the trump suit is.

54. If the dealer take the trump card into his hand before it is his turn to play, he may be desired to lay it on the table; should he show a wrong card, this card may be called, as also a second, a third, etc., until the trump card be produced.

See American Law No. 18.

55. If the dealer declare himself unable to recollect the trump card, his highest or lowest trump may be called at any time during that hand, and, unless it cause him to revoke, must be played. The call may be repeated, but not changed, *i.e.* from highest to lowest, or *vice versâ*, until such card is played.

See American Law No. 18.

CARDS LIABLE TO BE CALLED.

56. All exposed cards are liable to be called, and must be left on the table; but a card is not an exposed card when dropped on the floor or elsewhere below the table. The following are exposed cards:—

I. Two or more cards played at once.

II. Any card dropped with its face upwards, or in any way exposed on or above the table, even though

CARDS LIABLE TO BE CALLED.

20. The following cards are liable to be called by either adversary:—

I. Every card faced upon the table otherwise than in the regular course of play, but not including a card led out of turn.

II. Every card thrown with the one led or played to the current trick. The player must indicate the one played or led.

III. Every card so held by a player that his partner

snatched up so quickly that no one can name it.

sees any portion of its face.

IV. All cards in a hand lowered or shown by a player so that his partner sees more than one card of it.

V. Every card named by the player holding it.

57. If any one play to an imperfect trick the best card on the table, or lead one which is a winning card as against his adversaries and then lead again, or play several such winning cards one after the other, without waiting for his partner to play, the latter may be called on to win, if he can, the first or any of those tricks, and the other cards thus improperly played are exposed cards.

22. If a player leads a card better than any his adversaries hold of the suit, and then lead one or more cards without waiting for his partner to play, the latter may be called upon by either adversary to take the first trick, and the other cards thus improperly played are liable to be called. It makes no difference whether he plays them one after the other or throws them all on the table together ; after the first card is played the others are liable to be called.

See American Law No. 22.

58. If a player, or players, under the impression that the game is lost, or won, or for other reasons, throw his or their cards on the table face upwards, such cards are exposed, and liable to be called, each player's by the adversary; but should one player alone retain his hand, he cannot be forced to abandon it.

59. If all four players throw their cards on the table face upwards, the hands are abandoned; and no one can again take up his cards. Should this general exhibition show that the game might have been saved, or won, neither claim can be entertained, unless a revoke be established. The revoking players are then liable to the following penalties: they cannot, under any circumstances, win the game by the result of that hand, and the adversaries may add three to their score, or deduct three from that of the revoking players.

ABANDONED HANDS.

27. If all four players throw their cards on the table, face upwards, no further play of that hand is permitted. The result of the hand, as then claimed or admitted, is established, provided that, if a revoke is discovered, the revoke penalty attaches.

60. A card detached from the rest of the hand so as to be named is liable to be called; but should the adversary name a wrong card, he is liable to have a suit called when he or his partner have the lead.

No American Law.

61. If a player, who has rendered himself liable to have the highest or lowest of a suit called, fail to play as desired, or if when called on to lead one suit lead another, having in his hand one or more cards of that

23. A player having a card liable to be called must not play another until the adversaries have stated whether or not they wish to call the card liable to the penalty. If he plays another card without awaiting the decision

suit demanded, he incurs the penalty of a revoke.

62. If any player lead out of turn, his adversaries may either call the card erroneously led, or may call a suit from him or his partner when it is the next turn of either of them to lead.

63. If any player lead out of turn, and the other three have followed him, the trick is complete, and the error cannot be rectified; but if only the second, or the second and third, have played to the false lead, their cards, on discovery of the mistake, are taken back. There is no penalty against any one excepting the original offender, whose card may be called, or he, or his partner, when either of them has next the lead, may be compelled to play any suit demanded by the adversaries.

of the adversaries, such other card also is liable to be called.

38. If a player is lawfully called upon to play the highest or lowest of a suit, or to trump or not to trump a trick, or to lead a suit, and unnecessarily fails to comply, he is liable to the same penalty as if he had revoked.

LEADING OUT OF TURN.

24. If any player leads out of turn, a suit may be called from him or his partner, the first time it is the turn of either of them to lead. The penalty can be enforced only by the adversary on the right of the player from whom a suit can be lawfully called.

If a player so called on to lead a suit has none of it, or if all have played to the false lead, no penalty can be enforced. If all have not played to the trick, the cards erroneously played to such false lead are not liable to be called, and must be taken back.

64. In no case can a player be compelled to play a card which would oblige him to revoke.

65. The call of a card may be repeated until such card has been played.

66. If a player called on to lead a suit have none of it, the penalty is paid.

CARDS PLAYED IN ERROR, OR NOT PLAYED TO A TRICK.

67. If the third hand play before the second, the fourth hand may play before his partner.

68. Should the third hand not have played, and the fourth play before his partner, the latter may be called on to win or not to win the trick.

69. If any one omit playing to a former trick, and such error be not discovered until he has played to the next, the adversaries may claim a new deal.

21. All cards liable to be called must be placed and left face upwards on the table. A player must lead or play them when they are called, provided he can do so without revoking. The call may be repeated at each trick until the card is played. A player cannot be prevented from leading or playing a card liable to be called. If he can get rid of it in the course of play, no penalty remains.

PLAYING OUT OF TURN.

25. If the third hand plays before the second, the fourth hand also may play before the second.

26. If the third hand has not played, and the fourth hand plays before the second, the latter may be called upon by the third hand to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or, if he has none, to trump or not to trump the trick.

IRREGULARITIES IN THE HANDS.

19. If at any time after all have played to the first trick, the pack being perfect, a player is found to have either more or less than his correct number of cards, and

Should they decide that the deal stand good, the surplus cards at the end of the hand is considered to have been played to the imperfect trick, but does not constitute a revoke.

70. If any one play two cards to the same trick, or mix his trump or other card with a trick to which it does not properly belong, and the mistake be not discovered until the hand is played out, he is answerable for all consequent revokes he may have made. If, during the play of the hand, the error be detected, the tricks may be counted face downwards, in order to ascertain whether there be among them a card too many. Should this be the case, they may be searched and the card restored. The player is, however, liable for all revokes he may meanwhile have made.

THE REVOKE

71. Is when a player, holding one or more cards of the suit led, plays a card of a different suit.

72. The penalty for a revoke :—

I. Is at the option of the adversaries, who, at the

his adversaries have the right number, the latter, on the discovery of such surplus or deficiency, may consult and shall have the choice—

I. To have a new deal, or
II. To have the hand played out, in which case the surplus or missing card or cards are not taken into account.

If either of the adversaries also has more or less than his correct number of cards, there must be a new deal.

If any player has a surplus card by reason of an omission to play to a trick, his adversaries can exercise the foregoing privilege only after he has played to the trick following the one in which such omission occurred.

REVOKING.

28. A revoke is a renounce in error not corrected in time ; a player renounces in error when, holding one or more cards of the suit led, he plays a card of a different suit.

A renounce in error may

end of the hand, may either take three tricks from the revoking player or deduct three points from his score, or add three to their own score ;

II. Can be claimed for as many revokes as occur during the hand ;

III. Is applicable only to the score of the game in which it occurs ;

IV. Cannot be divided, *i.e.* a player cannot add one or two to his own score and deduct one or two from the revoking player ;

V. Takes precedence of every other score, *e.g.*, the claimants two, their opponents nothing ; the former add three to their score, and thereby win a treble game, even should the latter have made thirteen tricks and held four honours.

73. A revoke is established if the trick in which it occur be turned and quitted, *i.e.* the hand removed from that trick after it has been turned face downwards on the table ; or if either the revoking player or his partner, whether in his right turn or otherwise, lead or play to the following trick.

74. A player may ask his partner whether he has not a card of the suit which he has renounced. Should the be corrected by the player making it before the trick in which it occurs has been turned and quitted, unless either he or his partner, whether in his right turn or otherwise, has led or played to the following trick, or unless his partner has asked whether or not he has any of the suit renounced.

30. The penalty for revoking is the transfer of two tricks from the revoking side to their adversaries' ; it can be enforced for as many revokes as occur during the hand. The revoking side cannot win the game in that hand. If both sides revoke, neither can win the game in that hand.

See American Law No. 28.

See American Law No. 28, which is prohibitory as regards asking this question.

question be asked before the trick is turned and quitted, subsequent turning and quitting does not establish the revoke, and the error may be corrected, unless the question be answered in the negative, or unless the revoking player or his partner have led or played to the following trick.

75. At the end of the hand the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks.

See American Law No. 32.

76. If a player discover his mistake in time to save a revoke, his adversaries, whenever they think fit, may call the card thus played in error, or may require him to play his highest or lowest card to that trick in which he has renounced. Any player or players who have played after him may withdraw their cards and substitute others; the cards withdrawn are not liable to be called.

29. If a player corrects his mistake in time to save a revoke, the card improperly played by him is liable to be called. Any player or players who have played after him may withdraw their cards and substitute others. The cards so withdrawn are not liable to be called.

77. If a revoke be claimed and the accused player or his partner mix his cards before they have been sufficiently examined by the adversaries, the revoke is established. The mixing of

32. At the end of a hand the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks. If the cards have been mixed, the claim may be urged and proved, if possible; but no proof is neces-

the cards only renders the proof of a revoke difficult, but does not prevent the claim and possible establishment of the penalty.

78. A revoke cannot be claimed after the cards have been cut for the following deal.

79. The revoking player and his partner may, under all circumstances, require the hand in which the revoke has been detected to be played out.

80. If a revoke occur, be claimed, and proved, bets on the odd trick, or on amount of score, must be decided by the actual state of the latter after the penalty is paid.

81. Should the players on both sides subject themselves to the penalty of one or more revokes, neither can win the game; each is punished at the discretion of his adversary.

82. In whatever way the penalty is enforced, under no circumstances can a player win a game by the result of

sary, and the revoke is established, if, after it has been claimed, the accused player or his partner mixes the cards before they have been examined to the satisfaction of the adversaries.

33. The revoke can be claimed at any time before the cards have been presented and cut for the following deal, but not thereafter.

31. The revoking player and his partner may require the hand in which the revoke has been made to be played out, and score all points made by them up to the score of six.

No American Law.

See American Law No. 30, opposite English Law No. 72.

See American Laws Nos. 30 and 31.

the hand during which he has revoked; he cannot score more than four.

CALLING FOR NEW CARDS.

83. Any player (on paying for them) before, but not after, the pack be cut for the deal, may call for fresh cards. He must call for two new packs, of which the dealer takes his choice.

No American Law.

GENERAL RULES.

84. Where a player and his partner have an option of exacting from their adversaries one of two penalties, they should agree who is to make the election, but must not consult one another which of the two penalties it is advisable to exact; if they do so consult, they lose their right; and if either of them, with or without the consent of his partner, demand a penalty to which he is entitled, such decision is final. This rule does not apply in exacting the penalties for a revoke; partners have then a right to consult.

39. In all cases where a penalty has been incurred, the offender must await the decision of the adversaries. If either of them, with or without his partner's consent, demands a penalty to which they are entitled, such decision is final. If the wrong adversary demands a penalty, or a wrong penalty is demanded, none can be enforced.

85. Any one during the play of a trick, or after the four cards are played, and before, but not after, they

34. Any one, during the play of a trick and before the cards have been touched for the purpose of gathering

are touched for the purpose of gathering them together, may demand that the cards be placed before their respective players.

86. If any one, prior to his partner playing, should call attention to the trick, either by saying that it is his, or by naming his card, or without being required so to do, by drawing it towards him, the adversaries may require that opponent's partner to play the highest or lowest of the suit they led, or to win or lose the trick.

87. In all cases where a penalty has been incurred, the offender is bound to give reasonable time for the decision of his adversaries.

88. If a bystander make any remark which calls the attention of a player or players to an oversight affecting the score, he is liable to be called upon, by the players only, to pay the stakes and all bets on that game or rubber.

them together, may demand that the players draw their cards.

35. If any one, prior to his partner playing, calls attention in any manner to the trick or to the score, the adversary last to play to the trick may require the offender's partner to play his highest or lowest of the suit led, or if he has none, to trump, or not to trump the trick.

36. If any player says, "I can win the rest," "The rest are ours," "We have the game," or words to that effect, his partner's cards must be laid upon the table, and are liable to be called.

See American Law No. 39, placed opposite English Law No. 84.

No American Law.

89. A bystander, by agreement among the players, may decide any question.	No American Law.
90. A card or cards torn or marked must either be replaced by agreement, or new cards called at the expense of the table.	No American Law.
91. Any player may demand to see the last trick turned, and no more. Under no circumstances can more than eight cards be seen during the play of the hand, viz., the four cards on the table which have not been turned and quitted, and the last trick turned.	37. When a trick has been turned and quitted, it must not again be seen until after the hand has been played. A violation of this law subjects the offender's side to the same penalty as in the case of a lead out of turn.

CHAPTER II

Showing some points in existing Whist Laws which are open to controversy with proposals for amendment.—Suggestions for making penalties *simple*, *uniform*, and *just* in application.—Anomalies in the present *DUMMY* Laws.

I WILL now investigate some of the main differences between the laws of English Whist as published in the latest edition of *Cavendish*, and the laws of American Whist as published in *Whist of To-day*, by Mr. *Milton C. Work*, which have been given parallel arrangement in the last chapter.

There are ninety-one separate English laws as against only thirty-nine American laws.

The question which first suggests itself is, "How can such reduction be made in the American Code with due regard to efficiency in working?"

The answer is threefold :—

1. Since the Americans play a *game* of seven points instead of a *rubber*, and also since they do not score honours, they can at the outset dispense with most of our first twelve laws.
2. The Americans when formulating their Code had before them for information and con-

sideration our ninety-one laws, laboriously framed. From these they have extracted all that they believed to be useful and necessary, and have left out the remainder. Our English laws were getting a little bit prolix, and the time had come for overhaul, and the Americans have to a great extent shown us the right way.

3. In some cases the Americans have certainly embodied the gist of two or three of our laws into one of theirs; but they have generally done so advisedly, for there is no use in separating and lengthening when condensation and sequence in a single law may better serve the purpose.

The American Code does not altogether follow our own in the arrangement of the subject matter.

We both start on the same lines. In our law No. 1 we define our *Rubber*, and in their law No. 1 they define their *Game* which is analogous to our Rubber.

We follow with instructions and regulations as to *scoring* and *cutting* (Laws 2 to 15), whereas the Americans follow with the rules for *Forming the Table.*

At first thought it would appear that the Americans have taken the most common-sense view, because "Formation of the table" would seem to take priority of anything else. But it must be recognised that formation of the table has sometimes to be decided by cutting, and there-

fore the rules as regards cutting ought first to be given.

There are other cases also where the laws of the two countries vary in their order of insertion; but practically these differences are of little importance.

In the International Whist Congress which may be assembled to arrange uniformity, it is hoped that the following points in the Whist Laws may be considered:—

(*a*) By American law, No. 10, "the adversary must cut a portion from the top of the pack, and place it *towards* the dealer." Many in England do not cut this way. Our law should specify the *right* way.

(*b*) A new deal is required, very properly, both by American law No. 14 and by English law No. 37, "If any card except the last be faced in the pack"; but why the *exception*?

(*c*) The word *pack* as applied in English law No. 44, II., is inaccurate as regards "a *hand* dealt to a player." It would be far better to use the American description, viz., "*any other player's cards*," *vide* their law No. 17, VI. But the part of this law running "place the trump card, face downwards, *on* his own or any other pack," would be better if the word *touching* be substituted for the word *on*. In the magazine *Whist* for October, 1897, a case is cited of an old gentleman who placed the last card

[*i.e.* the trump card] face downwards *under* his cards; of course such a proceeding would not be tolerated, but the word *touching* most completely covers all the issues.

(*d*) Under American law No. 17, V., it is a *misdeal* if the dealer should look at the bottom or trump card before the deal is completed. This is far better than the English law No. 41, which gives the adversaries the right also to see the card, and then the option of a *fresh* deal.

(*e*) Law No. 44, Section V. of the English Code says :—

"Should the dealer, under the impression that he has made a mistake, either count the cards on the table or the remainder of the pack, it is a *misdeal.*"

American law No. 17, Section III., says :—

"If he counts the cards on the table or the remainder of the pack."

The dealer should by law be prohibited from moving any dealt card except where he may have delivered two at once, or may inadvertently not have dealt a card to its proper position; and as regards those cards remaining for dealing he should only uncover as in turn required for that operation. *Any* attempt at *counting* would then be impossible.

(*f*) English law No. 44, Section IV., says :—

"It is a misdeal should a player have fourteen cards and either of the other three less than thirteen."

This law as worded allows carelessness by partners, one of whom may pick up fourteen cards and the other only twelve cards, and who may both have neglected to count their hands, to go unpunished.

This is not just to two opponents who may each have picked up and held thirteen cards, and American law No. 19 recognises this fact, and capably legislates thus :—

"If at any time after all have played to the first trick, the pack being perfect, a player is found to have either more or less than his correct number of cards, and his adversaries have their right number, the latter upon the discovery of such surplus or deficiency may consult, and shall have the choice :

"I. To have a new deal ;

"II. Or to have the hand played out, in which case the surplus or missing card or cards are not taken into account."

General Drayson records[1] that he, seventeen years ago, recommended in *The Art of Practical Whist* the law as adopted by the Americans. It is certainly time that the amendment should also be made in the English Code.

(*g*) In a footnote to Law 52 in *Cavendish*, it is stated that "it is not usual to call the

[1] *Whist Laws and Whist Decisions*, by Major-General A. W. Drayson. Published by Harper Brothers, New York.

trump card if left on the table." Then why make *a law* giving such penalty?

Far better abolish the idea *of penalty*, and simply say that the trump card must be taken into the hand on notification by *any* of the players. The American law No. 18 makes no reservation about "not usual," but only allows the trump card to be treated as an exposed card after the *second* trick has been turned.

(*h*) In a footnote to law No. 53 (but why not embodied in the law itself?), *Cavendish* says, "any one may enquire what the trump suit is at any time," and American law No. 18 *embodies* this. But why should such a puerile question be allowed? Any man finding it necessary to ask for such information cannot be an attentive Whist-player, and should hardly be accorded special privilege in the questioning line.

(*i*) Our law No. 54 provides that if a player may take up into his hand the trump card before he should do, he may be required to lay it on the table. That is right, but there are penalties, not quite easy to remember by us all, attached to showing the wrong card, or to inability to remember the trump card. Now I wish specially to submit that *there should be simplicity and uniformity as regards all Whist penalties.* It will, I am sure, be conceded by Whist-players generally that the existing

penalties are a little difficult of adjustment in some cases, that they sometimes give rise to disputes, and—above all—that *they work most unevenly in degree of punishment for similar offences.* In many cases they may amount to no punishment at all, whereas sometimes they may bring loss of a hardly fought rubber. Therefore, in all cases except a *revoke*, I submit that the penalty should be *deduction of one game point from the offender's score, or of two game points if, when playing the English game, that score be four.*

(*j*) As regards *exposed cards*, referred to in English law No. 56. It is certain that no gentleman would ever purposely expose a card for the benefit of his partner; the whole question therefore resolves itself into "whether the partner *has* or *has not* seen any card believed to have been in an exposed position?" and the simple and straight way of ascertaining is to *ask* that partner; if he should say *he has not seen it*, there is an end of the matter; but if he says that he has seen it, let there be no calling of the card, but simply the penalty of deducting one point from the game score or two points if that score be at four.

The present laws may have been framed with some idea of exacting such penalties as would impress on the offender the nature of his offences.

But *let justice be simple and uniform in degree and in application*, and the penalties be of one description only, and so not hard to be remembered by those who strive to be sound Whist-players rather than experts in interpretation of difficulties arising from fanciful alternative legal provisions. The continual *calling* of an exposed card is an unnecessary piece of nonsense; *if* that penalty of *calling* be ruled to continue in its present applications, let the law stand that any singly exposed card *is to be played whenever there shall first be opportunity without revoke*; there will then be no *calling* for it.

(*k*) An authority on Whist has advanced, "By the English code you may lower the whole of your hand, so that your partner may see nearly every card in it, but there is no penalty for doing so."

This view seems hardly justified. Law No. 56 deals quite decisively with such cases. This law lays down that the penalty for exposure is due if a card be "*in any way exposed* on or *above* the table." Nothing can be more explicit than that, and any one would understand that lowering his cards so as to show them to his partner is most carelessly committing the offence of *exposure*, and therefore is more deserving of punishment than the inadvertent dropping of a card on the table.

There is practically no difference as to advantage derivable between lowering the hand so that it can be seen, and presenting it face displayed

for inspection, and it is difficult to understand how in either case, the fact of *exposure* could ever have been questioned.

(*l*) By English law No. 56, each of two or more cards played at once is treated as an exposed card and is liable to be called.

By American law No. 20, when cards are played as above, the player may indicate the one he intended to play, and the *others only* are exposed cards. The American law is best, being a proper and gentlemanlike settlement of what was pure accident.

(*m*) It has been asserted by some, that if a player may place his hand of cards upon the table, face upwards, *but so that only the top card can be seen*, the whole of the twelve cards hidden below it are *exposed*, and can be called.

This supposition is not only contrary to common sense, but also is not borne out by our law No. 56, nor by any law whatever, either English or American.

The cards thus laid down are neither *dropped* on the table, nor in any way *exposed* on or above the table, nor are they *faced* (*i.e.* the face *shown*) on the table. In fact, although the top card, and that only, is palpably an exposed card, and therefore liable to be called, the others being completely covered by it may actually be lying face upwards or face *downwards*, nobody can say which without touching or removing the top card for inspection, and the owner of the hand would hardly permit that.

An *exposed card* is a card placed in such a position that the partner could see it, and to call any other card by that name is quibbling and unsound, and often originates specious questioning of Whist laws. Moreover, all exposed cards should be *named. If a card cannot be named* by either of the three players not possessing it, it cannot be said to have been exposed to view, and Section II. of law No. 56 is at variance in its application with our very peculiar law No. 60, which latter requires a card to be *named.*

Professor W. W. Skeat, in his *Dictionary of the English Language*, gives the word *exposed* as coming to us through the French and Latin, and the only meaning "laid open to view."

If a player might indulge in the freak of putting his handkerchief over his cards and so laying them face upwards [though covered over] on the table, he would be doing a silly thing, but would certainly not have *exposed* his hand.

(*n*) English law No. 57 is defective as compared with American law No. 22. The last paragraph in the American law clears away all doubt as to the penalty which a player, impatient of success in the usual way, renders himself liable to. The American law says: "It makes no difference whether he (the confident one) plays the cards one after the other, or throws them all on the table together; after the first card is played the others are liable to be called."

In illustration : Suppose a player to have A, K, and J of trumps left as his three last cards, and an opponent has Q and but one other trump; then if the A, K, J be led in quick succession in that order without waiting for others to play, or if they be thrown on the table as declaring winning of the three last tricks, the first only, viz., the ace, stands good as a lead, and to this the opponent plays his small trump, and then calls the J and wins it with his Q; after the first card led, viz., the ace, the impatient one has to play the other two as they may be called by the adversaries.

(*o*) With reference to our law No. 58, no player should easily throw down his cards to show that a game is *won*; it will not take a moment to prove this in the ordinary course of leads, and he might hold up his triumph for that moment. The penalty, however, may in fairness simply be that he shall take his hand back and play it with *his partner's* hand *hors de combat.*

If a player throws down his hand as signifying that the game is *lost*, he should himself be *hors de combat*; there need be no discussion on such action, but simply the playing out of the cards which are *not hors de combat*, if so required by the offender's partner. At the same time the penalty of calling the exposed cards *if retained at all* might be well retained for the above offences.

(*p*) Our law No. 60, respecting a card detached so as to be guessed at, with a penalty

going the other way if the opponent makes a wrong shot at naming, savours of the game of *Pitch and Toss*, and not of *Whist*; any man who contracts the bad habit of fingering and detaching the cards in his hand before it is his turn to play should confine himself to a very tolerant domestic rubber.

(*q*) English law No. 62 provides that where a player leads out of turn his adversaries may either call the card erroneously led as being an exposed card, or may call a suit from him or his partner when next it is the turn of either of them to lead. American law No. 24 allows only the last-named of these penalties, and also provides that it can only be enforced by the player on the right hand of the one from whom the suit is called.

The American law has the advantage of simplicity; it is far best to avoid complications which arise from giving option of two or more penalties.

Even the American single penalty, however, works very unequally in punishment, and it would be far more just to make it, for English Whist, deduction of one point from the game score, or of two points when the score may be standing at four.

(*r*) For such offences as indicated by our law No. 86, the simple penalty proposed in clause (*i*) of this chapter would also properly meet the conditions, and would be

far more easily remembered than the alternative penalties now in force.

(*s*) American law No. 36 wisely provides that if any player says "the game is ours," or words to that effect, his partner's cards must be laid on the table, and are liable to be called. Such observations are unwarrantable, and there should be punishment provided for them in the English code, perhaps a fine of two game points.

(*t*) All existing penalties, except that for the *Revoke*, may thus perhaps give way to the one indicated in paragraph (*t*), but the Revoke is a greater Whist crime than any other; happily it rarely occurs amongst good players, but when it does happen, let the English penalty enforced be *the loss of the game*; also let there be added to the laws: "If the revoking player and his partner may lose the rubber, the player committing the Revoke shall pay the points lost by his partner; he shall not, however, be responsible for bets made by any one." The Americans lay down for this offence the transfer of two tricks from the revoking side to their adversaries, and as with ourselves, do not allow the revoking side to win the game in that hand. As the American *game* takes the place of our *rubber*, the penalty I propose above would not generally be greater than the existing American penalty.

It may be here noticed that in English law No. 59 the citing of the penalties for the Revoke seems superfluous; it would be quite sufficient to refer to them only in general terms. These Revoke penalties are properly enunciated in law No. 72. English law No. 59 omits mention of the option of taking three tricks from the Revoking player; it is therefore incomplete as well as redundant.

(*u*) Law No. 91 should be expunged. *Pembridge* says he has never met with a good Whist-player who did not agree that this law should be abolished. They have done away with it in America and Australia, and why cannot we do likewise? The thing is a standing scandal to our Whist intelligence.

At the point when one is giving one's short two seconds to make sure of the next lead being sound, one should not be liable to be put out by a request to see a trick that is just turned and done with, and to which all the intellectual capacity of the players was presumably given when the cards composing it were delivered, and lying faced on the table.

There are men who inflict themselves at a Whist table who continually—time after time—ask to see the trick just turned, and disturb one's neatly stored property and one's thought in a most troubling way.

If, on account of quickness of the delivery one may not quite note who played any particular card,

the request, ere the trick is collected, to place the cards is fair and reasonable, and nobody objects; but that should certainly terminate all such reference during play of the hand.

There is no Whist *Law* which would prevent any player from noting on a piece of paper the fall of each card in the tricks, and referring to these notes during the subsequent play; but of course no one attempting such a thing would be tolerated; yet the man constantly referring to the last trick is practically a worse nuisance.

(*v*) American law No. 39 provides:—

"If the wrong adversary demand a penalty, or a wrong penalty is demanded, none can be enforced."

This is a wise provision, and should be embodied in the English Code. The demand of a wrong penalty from opponents who are inexperienced may cause injustice; moreover, those who demand penalties should themselves be free from error.

DUMMY.

Anomalies in the existing DUMMY Laws.

The existing *Dummy* laws, short as they are, certainly appear to require considerable overhauling. Dummy is treated with too little consideration by some writers on Whist. A great deal of the "setting-up drill" so essential in the education of young Whist-players can be well compassed by play with *Dummy* or even *Double Dummy*. More-

over, all who are keen players, and who have at times found themselves at stations where they could not always raise a fourth, will remember many pleasant Whist hours with dummy taking the vacant chair. Let none, therefore, speak disrespectfully of him; he behaves better than many partners; he neither reproaches you if you make a mistake, nor grumbles when he may hold bad cards; he is for the time of partnership your *alter ego*, and legislation for him should convey that acknowledgment rather than rudely assert that he is blind and deaf. He is *neither*, for he works by the eyes and the ears of his partner, viz., of yourself, when you have the advantage of cutting in with him. The main anomalies in the laws deemed sufficient for Dummy are now referred to.

It is laid down that :—

"Dummy is not liable to the penalty for a revoke, as the adversaries can see the cards."

Yet by the next law :—

"If a card be led from Dummy's hand when Dummy's partner should have led from his own hand, or *vice versâ*, a suit may be called from the hand which ought to have led."

Why should Dummy or his partner be punished for the second offence and not for the revoke?

Both are offences which can equally be noticed and rectified by the opponents at the time, and both are offences from which Dummy and his partner might derive advantage!

Again: why should Dummy's partner be allowed to declare that he can win the game, or the remainder of the tricks, etc., and yet not be liable to the penalty that may be exacted therefor at ordinary Whist? It is true that Dummy cannot profit by hearing such statements, nor can he derive benefit by seeing exposed cards; but it should be recognised that these irregularities may detrimentally mislead either or both of the adversaries, who cannot know the contents of each other's hand, nor of the hand of the offender. Such breaches of law or etiquette deserve no pardon; they should be punished just as in ordinary Whist.

With a perfect partner, Dummy's play is perfect, and, highest amongst his virtues, he neither stops to think nor confuses you by requests to inspect tricks which are turned and quitted.

CHAPTER III

Proposed additions to the existing Whist Laws.—The Etiquette of Whist.—Notes on bad habits.—Dealer delaying table with the trump card held face downwards.—Showing elation or depression on taking up one's hand.—Requiring to see a trick which has been turned, as allowed by English Law No. 91.—Smokers and non-smokers.—Beating the Devil's Tattoo.—Making passes with extended hand.—Ostentatiously counting tricks already made.—Lookers-on to make no remark whatever, and not to stand around the table.—Playing your cards carefully to the centre of the table.—Hammering tricks down with a *click* after collecting.—Throwing abandoned hands roughly on the table.—Leading prematurely.—Showing disapproval of your partner's play by word or gesture.—Finding fault with your partner.—Courtesy as regards willingness to form a new table.—Talking when other Whist tables are going on in the same room.—Playing a card to a trick and gathering at the same time.—Fingering, or partly drawing a card before it is one's turn to play.—Lookers-on conversing with players.—Sitting squarely to the table and holding the cards perpendicularly.—*Faced cards* in dealing are often due to want of care after cutting for partners.—Mannerism in play.—Grumbling.—Scoring honours when not entitled to do so.—Wrongfully presenting the pack to be cut.—Laws and Etiquette rules to be hung conspicuously in all card rooms.

THE boundaries between *legal rulings* and the *obligations of etiquette* need some readjustment. It has been often said that it would be best to leave nothing to etiquette that could be clearly and properly dealt with by

law, because those who would commit breaches of etiquette are the very ones who require to be tightly bound by regulations.

I would propose that the following *Laws* be added to the Code :—[*vide* also Chapter II.]

(*a*) *Any player, on becoming aware that he has made a revoke, shall forthwith declare the same to the table.* *Cavendish* says, "It is unfair to revoke purposely; having made a revoke, a player is not justified in making a second to conceal the first." Certainly one who makes a revoke should be bound by *Whist Law* as well as in honour to announce the fact as soon as he may discover it, and not tacitly pocket the proceeds of his sinful conduct if his unobservant opponents may happen *not to find him out.*

(*b*) *On the turn coming for any player to play his card, he must do so without hesitating more than ten seconds.*

Pembridge has said, "*Never think; know!*" If you don't *know*, thinking won't often mend matters. Whist is a game for prompt decision and action—not for senseless hesitation. It is annoying to three good players to have the fourth cast his eyes upwards with an air of superior wisdom and keep the table waiting. Moreover, it is *unfair.* By such a procedure the partner of the thinker can gather what the doubts are about, and this is not

a lawful method of conveying or acquiring information.

It may be convenient to limit precisely the time of delay in playing. Ten seconds, or whilst one may count ten, would be as long as others should ever be kept waiting.

If a man hesitates when he has only one of a suit to play, or where there is no doubt whatever as to the card he ought to play, he acts unfairly, and should be excluded from the Whist room.

(*c*) *Any one who plays out a winning card with marked emphasis, should on the agreement of the three other players composing the table that this offence was committed, be fined two points, the same to go to club funds.*

This offence is a bad one; it should not, however, be visited on the partner by reason of any penalty affecting the score; he should have a voice equally with the opponents in condemnation *and punishment of the offender.*

* * * *

There are bad habits which cannot be dealt with by penalties. What follows is intended for those *only* who have hitherto played the game where poor Whist form prevails. But such players are in a great majority; many in humble social position play an extremely shrewd game; the time will come when they will make it a point to study such leading authorities as *Cavendish*, *Pole*, and *Drayson*, and to learn the game afresh.

Let every one of these take himself to task, and then if he may unwittingly have been a sinner, let him reform.

When dealing, holding the trump card face downwards, and thus keeping the table waiting whilst conversing with some one on the play of the last hand, etc.

This is an annoying habit as delaying others who want to be sorting their cards. In turning up the trump card, cast it to your front. A shortsighted player—and there are many—cannot see it well if you deposit it close to your waistcoat pocket.

Allowing any appearance of elation when holding a good hand, or of depression with a bad hand.

It is a little hard with some natures to avoid this, but it must be striven against and quite conquered. It is *unfair.*

It is hoped that Law 91 *will soon be abolished.* Meanwhile those who in their present legal right require reference to a turned trick should recognise that they are thereby often upsetting the minds of the more competent members of the table; they would then in courtesy and fairness refrain from this practice.

Any who look over hands of players should, when smoking, take note as to whether the holder of the hand they look over is also a smoker, and see that the smoke cloud created does not envelope a non-smoker to his confusion.

The veteran Whist-player, General Drayson, a non-smoker, tells how his play has been quite stopped

by the thoughtlessness of smoking lookers-on. At the same time, Whist is perhaps more a smoker's game than is any other; it is only from lookers-on that non-smokers can reasonably ask forbearance that way.

Some play the Devil's Tattoo on the Whist table, as showing they are in a fix as to which card to play, or perhaps to hurry up a player who thinks he is *thinking*; such a performance is in the first case as silly as it is unfair, and in the latter case would not be necessary if the "ten seconds" rule be adopted.

Not less ridiculous is the habit some players have of *waving the hand* when feeling uncertain what to lead; it is difficult to understand that making graceful passes with extended fingers can really be of intellectual assistance, and this mannerism as indicating the conditions of the cards held is manifestly *unfair*.

There are those who, during the play of a hand, count the tricks they have secured, by touching each one in succession with the forefinger, or by palpably thus counting the cards still remaining in hand which they estimate to be good for tricks. Such habits are both childish and unfair.

No looker-on should ever put in a word at a Whist dispute unless he may be specially asked for his opinion, and even then he will sometimes get only about as much thankfulness as he would do if arbitrating in a case of domestic differences. No one should stand closely around a Whist table; it

disconcerts many players to have persons standing or sauntering near them; ask permission to look over one hand, and then quietly sit aside or else stand well back.

It is due to one's partner and to the other players that cards should be carefully *played to the centre of the table*, and neither put down just in front of one where others will have to reach forward to collect them, nor pitched across to some distance with risk of dropping to the floor.

Hammering each trick down after gathering it, so as to make a loud *click*, is unnecessary; the trick can be squared without this.

When a player may consider the game to be won or lost, he should never pitch down the remaining cards in his hand so that they may cause confusion by becoming mixed with tricks or with another abandoned hand; he should simply place his hand face upwards on the table. Many disputes arise from cards being thrown roughly, and also *faced cards* are likely to arise thereby in the subsequent deal.

No player should lead until the previous trick has been gathered off the centre of the table—or perhaps better still, not before it is turned and quitted; there is danger of confusion and of getting the cards mixed if there be premature lead.

No matter how outrageously you may consider your partner to have played, you must *neither look reproachfully nor show by the delivery of your own card* that your mind is troubled within you; any

offence in this groove should be punished by a fine of a point value to go to the club funds.

There is really not much use in finding fault with your partner after the play of the hand is over for any blunder he may have committed. If he has in him the making of a Whist-player, he will himself probably have seen the error of his ways, and if he be a hopelessly bad subject, you but ruffle yourself to no good purpose. Moreover, he has certainly *done his best.*

If a player may see that his partner is, under a misapprehension, palpably *preparing to lead out of turn*, it is allowable to raise the hand and say "hold" or "stop."

Above all things, manners in the card rooms should be *sincerely courteous.* When a rubber of six players is made up, it not infrequently occurs that two or three enter the room with a wish to form another table; perhaps the two who are sitting out of the rubber already formed prefer not to join a fresh rubber because they rather like their set, or because they are sure of playing two rubbers in sequence by staying at the first table. This refusal is, however, sometimes not quite considerate to the new-comers, who may have to wait a long time for fresh arrivals, and, to obviate the difficulty to some extent a regulation might very well be introduced to the effect: "When a player comes from a rubber already formed in order to make up a fresh table, he shall be entitled to play two rubbers in succession at the new table."

Some experienced players do not care to cut into a rubber where they see a poor player is included, but their objection has little sympathy from men of larger minds. A close observation and study of the ways of an erratic player is very interesting and instructive; moreover, those who consider themselves superior players should remember that there was once a time when their partners did not always approve of their system of play; and further, if the consideration of winning or losing be of importance, the good player is more likely to win where a bad player forms one of the table because it is two to one that the bad player will be cut as a partner by some other member.

The Americans are silent over their Whist.

We Englishmen break out a little into speech sometimes. I know a card room where there are two or three—good fellows as well as good Whist-players—who sometimes forget that there are other tables going, and who once in a way express their interest in hands just played very audibly indeed; then the fellows at other rubbers hammer their knuckles on the tables to enjoin silence. The noisy ones immediately comply, but keep a keen look-out for the remarks or ejaculations that may in due course come from the lips of their late correctors, and then in turn *they* come down hard with their knuckles. This good-humoured way of directing attention to little weaknesses does no harm, and when retaliating there is but the idea of showing that human nature is not of much better quality at one Whist table than at another.

Some, as fourth players, when winning a trick have a habit of playing their card in combined movement with gathering the trick together, and the third player thereby finds it difficult to see the card played last, the opponent's fingers being in the way. A card played should always be *cast from the hand*, and not thus held and gathered in the trick in one movement. Moreover, by our Law No. 85, a player is only allowed to demand that the cards of a trick may be *placed* prior to their being *touched* for the purpose of gathering them together; manifestly, if gathering together be made in combination with the play of the last card of the trick, players are debarred from what is conceded by Law No. 85.

Where play has been specially quick, or one's attention unexpectedly diverted for a second or two, it may be required to ask that the cards be placed. It is hardly necessary to say that this request for placing the cards is to be made *wholly and solely* because one did not himself catch the fall of them, and proper attention to the play should render the request a very rare one.

A player should not partly draw his card before it comes to his turn to play; this premature action might be construed to indicate that the winning or losing of the trick is a foregone conclusion, no matter what the previous player may put down, and such an intimation is unfair.

Lookers-on must not talk with players. Even if the player addressed may permit this, it is very

probable that his partner and opponents would much prefer that there should be nothing outside to distract attention.

Players should sit squarely to the table, and not allow their cards to slope forward, so that they might possibly be seen; the hand of cards should be held perpendicularly, or as nearly so as convenient. It would be well if all Whist recruits were put through a course of *Position Drill*.

Many of the cases of "faced cards" in dealing arise from carelessness in mixing the cards of the two packs when "cutting out," followed by "cutting for partners." Care should be taken to put the pack first cut from quite aside before using the second pack to cut for partners; also in gathering a pack together after thus cutting there is often want of care in turning back the cards which have just been exposed.

Mannerism, or peculiar affectation in playing, should be avoided. If a player purses his lips, wrinkles his brows, or swings a card around before casting it to the table, etc., accomplished players will not desire to play with him.

Grumbling shows a poor nature; it is more specially referred to in Chapter XVI., as it is assumed to be concomitant with *bad* luck.

Discussion between partners as to their right to score honours is a necessity; but claiming them wrongfully is a nuisance, and really a careless mistake to make, and might occasion unfair loss to opponents. A law should be introduced that if

two players wrongfully *score* honours, they shall, on conviction, take down this score, and the opponents be entitled to score two points as a set-off against the wrong which might have been done to them. *Major A.*, writing sixty years ago, records that this rule was observed in two or three London clubs, and adds that "*it is a rule that ought to become general.*"

All Whist-players fully recognise that a dealer's partner should, after shuffling the other pack, be very careful to place it at his right hand, so that it may be in proper position for the dealer next in turn; and if any other member of the table may elect to shuffle, he should be particular to put the cards back in their place. Strict attention to this obviates necessity for the question, "Whose deal is it?" There is a very bad habit begotten of gross carelessness or inattention, which should be met by *a penalty*; *i.e.* some players will, on the pack being duly presented by the dealer to be cut, take it up, and absently commence to shuffle it; after completing the shuffling, such a delinquent then presents it to the member on his right, to cut it for *himself*, and in that case gets two deals in succession. This sort of carelessness may cause wrongful loss of the deal, and should be punished by *Whist Law*. There should also equally be penalty against one who, on the time arriving for a deal, takes up the pack, *properly placed at his right hand*, and presents it to be cut for himself to deal.

Of course in all Whist rooms *Cavendish* and

other standard works are available for reference; but publicity as regards both the Laws and the Regulations for Etiquette (as prohibiting *bad habits*) would be best insured by having a copy of each framed and hung conspicuously on the walls in each room, just as in the case of the Laws for Billiards being exhibited in a billiard room. A man who will not study books greatly, will, when standing by the fireplace with his cigar, waiting for his turn to cut in, often read regulation boards, and I believe that such increased advertisement of laws and regulations as I have suggested would do more to promote Whist Law knowledge than anything else that could be devised.

CHAPTER IV

The objects of American Leads and Signallings.

THE avowed object is, by the cards played to convey to one's partner the utmost detailed information possible; in fact, to enable him to read the remaining cards in one's hand, both as regards value and length of suit.

Now, it will be seen that, if the opponents adopt the same system, the two sides would be on a par in strategy, and, with equality in card-holding, success would rest with those who best worked the scheme; but what happens if the two opponents thankfully observe all these signallings, and use the knowledge gained for aggressive purposes, but themselves concede no such corresponding information in return? The reply seems plain and conclusive; the signallers must, unless possessing such a preponderance of strength, as to ensure getting command late in the hand, bring defeat upon themselves! The case is analogous to that of two allied armies which are separated by a tract of country, signalling across it to each other; and with the enemy in equal force lying hidden on each side quietly taking in all the signalled information, keeping their own movements dark, and preparing to strike when the most

favourable opportunities arrive. In the event of the signallers being in such force as to be able to crush their opponents, the information they give may originate combined movements which will render their victory more decisive and complete than it would otherwise be; but a most disastrous defeat will but be invited, when the well-informed enemy may prove to be of superior strength to the signallers.

Some Whist-players have been riding the hobby of signalling and early declaration of long cards to a very trick-losing extent. Signalling has always been looked upon doubtfully by sound Whist-players of the old school. Pembridge in his most clever work, *Whist or Bumblepuppy*,[1] speaks contemptuously of the greatest and first of all signals, *Blue Peter*. In this and many other instances Pembridge has shown how well he can hit an objectionable and obstructive Whist nail precisely on the head and drive it home. There is a true ring in all his arguments that alike dusts Whist orthodoxy and squashes quick-growing, harmful fungi.

[2] Professor W. Pole, F.R.S.,—of whose works on Whist *Cavendish*[3] says: "These books exhibit the game both theoretically and practically in the

[1] *Whist or Bumblepuppy*, by Pembridge. Published by Mudie & Sons, Coventry Street, London, W.

[2] *The Theory of Whist*, by Dr. William Pole, F.R.S., etc. Published by Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., London.

[3] *The Laws and Principles of Whist*, by "Cavendish." Published by Thomas de La Rue & Co., London.

perfect state at which it has arrived during the last two centuries,"—does not now seem to think much of the *Blue Peter*.

I will submit by a fully illustrative example, showing how it is that excessive signalling and early conveyance of information for use at a remote period cannot prove successful as a rule.

As previously referred to, the whole aim of American Leads, Trump-showing Leads, etc., is stated to be *to give the utmost information to your partner, even although you at the same time give the same full information to two opponents*.

It follows that when such a lead as the fourth best of a suit is made, the leader plays his card with the object of showing the table as far as possible what he holds in that suit. Let him have his desire, and let his suit be forthwith thrown face upwards on the table; but, of course, with no penalty of call as exposed cards.

Similarly, let the signaller or his partner, each time he *commences* to show further details, lay on the table all the information cards under reference. We shall thus very early in the play have the two signalling hands wholly exposed; or if a few cards be held up, it would not be very difficult for shrewd opponents to infer exactly what these are.

Thus, there are two exposed hands playing in partnership against two adversaries' hands held up. Now each of the last-named players knows, by what he sees exposed, precisely what cards are

remaining in his partner's hand, and can lead through strength or up to weakness with *certainty* as to advantageous result, whereas the exposed hands playing in partnership are wholly ignorant as to which of the adverse hands may contain the cards to be fought against!

Nothing can more clearly demonstrate the grave disadvantages of signalling and giving over-information when practised against shrewd enemies capable of profiting by what is gratuitously made patent to them.

In the magazine *Whist*[1] for April, 1896, in a communication regarding a late Inter-City Tournament at Brooklyn, the following note respecting the play of the Manhattan Whist Team, which took the first prizes, is inserted :—

"The Mahattans use no number-showing leads and no *plain* suit echoes and no unblocking tactics, no calls through honours turned; and on the advice of their Captain (Mr. R. F. Foster) they discarded the lead of the fourth best and with it the Eleven rule, which made him famous."

This was rather a startling announcement! I will give another extract as indicating the limited scope of application of the American leads as considered judicious by one of the most zealous promoters of them. Mr. Milton C. Work, one of the latest great American Whist Authorities, whilst generally upholding American leads, trump-showing leads, etc., candidly says :—

[1] *Whist*, a monthly journal. Editor, Cassius M. Paine, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

[1] "The conclusion which the writer has reached upon the question of leads is, that for players of moderate abilities the system of old leads is the best, because it is the most simple. To such a player the intricacies of the system of American leads are most confusing, and often, in trying to determine some subtle question of how to show the number of cards in a suit, some point of play of the greatest practical value is overlooked."

Just so, and Mr. Work might have added that the *deep-lying schemes intended to be built up by American leads constantly crumble to pieces before the stage is reached for chance of any advantageous result.*

The issue sought to be here presented would be incomplete without the extract given below. Speaking of the new system of leads, Mr. R. F. Foster, of New York, in his *Whist Manual*[2] says, (p. 141):—

"This new system withholds the important information as to the establishment of the suit until the *second* round, substituting often useless details as to numbers of small cards. The delay often prevents your partner from coming to your assistance with his trumps, and by the time your information is complete, the adversaries have probably taken the lead and are masters of the situation. Having an extensive acquaintance amongst the strongest players, I find that they have tried and have *abandoned* these leads as a trick-losing game; in theory they are very pretty, in practice they are a failure."

[1] *Whist of To-Day*, by Milton C. Work. Published by Dreka, Philadelphia, U.S.A.

[2] *Foster's Whist Manual*, by R. F. Foster, of New York. Published by Messrs. Mudie & Sons, Coventry Street, London, W.

Now most English Whist-players would say that the *Whist Manual* of Mr. Foster is quite sufficiently advanced as regards advocating leads which show precise numerical strength; and further, that whilst this manual is second to none in thoroughly sound instruction in the game, starting as it does from the very earliest stages, yet the combinations it provides for mastery by a young Whist-player are rather much for the brain of an average English student to tackle.

The above note of Mr. Foster's decisively confirms the important point which I would now submit; *i.e.*, that if Whist of the Future is to be a game of intellectual *enjoyment* as qualified by *luck*, there must be less consideration given to the signallings and attempted calculations of numerical details supposed to be gleaned therefrom.

The signals most generally recognised in America are specially discussed further on, in Chapter XIV.

CHAPTER V

The origin of *WHISK*, afterwards called WHIST.—Some English and American Whist differences.—Scoring of Honours increases the chance for brilliant play.—Meanings of the titles given to the Honours.—Advantages and disadvantages of some Trans-Atlantic innovations.

BOTH *Cavendish* and *Pole* have in their works made careful investigation as to the origin of the word *WHIST*.

The game was first written *WHISK* in verses by Taylor in the year 1621. It may be likely that this name was chosen on account of the brisk manner of dealing the pack of cards as compared with the deliberate apportionment of them [they often being slowly counted out two or three at a time] adopted for the other card games then in vogue. *Halliwell*, in his *Dictionary of Archaisms*, gives as a meaning of the word *Whisk*, "to do anything hastily," and *Skeat* says, "to sweep round rapidly."

For forty-two years the name was *Whisk* solely, and for most of that period the game was probably rather a noisy one, as being played principally in low taverns and open to the free comments of the onlookers. When such a game as this was first started there could hardly have

been any idea of silence connected with the name to be conferred upon it.

The spelling *Whist* first occurs in 1663, thus :—

> "But what is this? A game of Whist
> Unto our Plowden-Canonist."

This might almost appear to have been a shift of the poet to make rhyme, but that a little later [in 1674] we find Cotton in his Book of Games not only writing *Whist*, but also explaining that the game is so called from the silence to be observed in the play.

Thus it may be that the game was first named *Whisk* from the activity connected with it, and then, by a very easy and natural substitution of a letter of the alphabet, altered to *Whist* as the necessity for silence during play became recognised.

* * * *

Some important differences between English Whist and American Whist will now be dealt with, and with fair consideration of the good points of each system modifications might be agreed upon internationally, and uniformity and harmony arranged and settled. Players who are well versed in the American game are already fully acquainted with the definitions, etc., contained in this chapter, and can omit perusal; but I write also for those who may not yet thoroughly have investigated the differences which exist. In America the game has been altered or adjusted with the hope to

make it purely a game of skill and to eliminate the element of luck. This result, however, can never be completely attained.

We all know how, in our English game, the scoring of *Honours* comes in overwhelmingly sometimes, and the victory is thereby wrested in cases where strong cards and skilful adverse play might otherwise have won *Certainly* a game may be influenced by honours, *just as much as it would be by favourable or unfavourable cards generally*; but as regards the average holding of them, one side is as likely to benefit as the other. And now comes the point, that as *the play* develops the positions of honours, the scope for effort to save or win the game, is broadened and yet intensified.

The present generation can have no memories of the glory of *Long Whist*, how with the score arrived at eight the partners would, when each holding an honour, look for the welcome "Can ye one?"; or how when a partner with two honours in his hand would challenge, the third honour might perchance be contributed and the game claimed.

This "*Can ye one?*" brought about most interesting and instructive situations, for the known possessor of two honours would be badly led through, and his weak partner would be led up to and finessed against; it is unfortunate that the practice was abolished by the conditions of Short Whist.

The Americans, in their idea of reducing the

element of luck, have, by the non-scoring of honours, done away with positions where success would fall to players of the very best class, viz., to those who most quickly grasp situations of exceptional scoring possibilities, and who adapt the further play of their hand accordingly. Therefore *honours* should still maintain their influence over the game by scoring accompanying the holding of them. Thereby the highest degrees of skill and of Whist perception are accorded their special chances.

Perhaps, however, it would be a considerable improvement if the holding of the four honours might only be allowed to count as *three* in the game score. When partners hold four by honours they are usually pretty sure to win the odd trick, and many players are apt, rather easily, to throw up their hands with the adverse honours thus shown; but if the holders might have to gain *two* by cards to secure the game, the result would frequently be vigorously contested. Thus three honours with partners should score *two* as at present, and four honours should score *three*.

* * * *

As regards derivation of the names given to the honours, *Ace* simply means "one." Professor Skeat, M.A., in his *Dictionary of the English Language*,[1] notes that it is said to be the Tarentine

[1] An *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, by the Rev. Walter W. Skeat, M.A. Published at the Clarendon Press, Oxford.

pronunciation of the Greek word having that signification. The word *King* coming through Anglo-Saxon to us means *Chief Ruler*; the word *Queen*, a *Lady Sovereign*; and the word *Knave*, a *servant boy*; Chaucer defines him as one "washing the dishes." The Americans call the knave *Jack*, which word signifies *a military coat worn over the coat of mail.* This seems very appropriate as regards the dress of that face card, and, moreover, the initial letter J is distinctive when writing down note of the *Face cards*: otherwise we must introduce at least two letters to show whether we refer to the *King* or to the *Knave*, and even then the distinction is not too clear. So in this book I write J for *Jack* instead of *Kn* for *Knave.*

* * * *

Even should it still be asserted by some that the scoring of honours proves adverse to winning by skill, it must be borne in mind that matches are now usually settled by *Duplicate Whist* [*i.e.*, that each hand is recorded when first played, and then again played by reversed opponents], so that the scoring of the honours would go equally to each of the contesting teams, and successful result would rest with the side that might be most prompt to grasp a fortuitous or unfortunate situation and to show tactical ability accordingly.

The play of the hands for the second time in Duplicate Whist is called *Overplay.*

* * * *

We all like to have a second chance before we give in; a *game* of seven points without honours counting is not quite to the average Englishman's mind the same thing as a *Rubber*, viz., *the best two out of three.* Short Whist was introduced because Long Whist was found a little bit *too* long, and did not quickly enough give the resultant reward due to brilliant coups as played in a single hand. Our present *Short Whist Rubber* would be hard to beat in that respect, combining as it does the changes in tactics arising from the gradually ascertained positions of honours, and the intensity of the final struggle over each of two or three games composing the rubber. We get all this pleasant excitement, and incitement to intellectual successes in the same time as occupied by an American game of seven points.

In the case where the hands are played and then done with, just as we do in our ordinary rubbers, the Americans apply the term *Straight Whist* as distinguishing from *Duplicate Whist.*

Undoubtedly, in Duplicate Whist the results will roughly average the skill displayed by the contesting teams, provided no hobbies as regards signalling, long-suit system, short-suit system, trump-showing leads, leads from fourth best, etc., etc., be ridden too extensively by either side; hobbyists would in the end always get worsted.

In truth, each *system* seems to get beaten in turn mainly because *it is carried to an extreme*; the good game of orthodox Whist will not bear

outrages of systematizing. The opening leads of Whist should, however, be as clearly defined as the opening moves at Chess; but very shortly the fall of the cards and the tactics inaugurated by opponents will originate complications which can only be successfully dealt with by men of *Whist Perception.* This gift can but be acquired and improved by most careful practice and observation.

CHAPTER VI

Lead Strategy of the Future.

From the strongest suit.—Following with lead from the shortest suit under certain conditions.—The Singleton Lead.—Jumping the lead to show desire to ruff.—Some general observations bearing on above.

THE *Evening Telegraph* of Philadelphia, U.S.A., inaugurated newspaper Whist contests, specifying the cards happening to be held in different hands actually dealt, and offering prizes to those who reported the greatest number of successful original leads as determined by the repeated actual play out of the hands.

The result appeared almost a foregone conclusion, because the *first* lead would usually be from the strongest plain suit, unless the general strength and especial strength in trumps might warrant an original lead of trumps. Moreover, the card which should be thus led from the combinations in any suit is defined in all Whist Books. With the strongest suit first declared you give your partner the most valuable information whereupon to frame combined strategy.

But having done correctly so far, it becomes of the greatest importance next to tell him what he should do if he may prove to be not strong enough

to play a combined forward game on the lines of your strong suit lead as announced to him.

This is often best done by showing him, in the second suit you have to lead, *your shortest suit.* He then at once understands that you wish to be forced to trump that second suit led, and that he may with advantage, whilst forcing you, hold back his high cards therein with a view to stand over the opponents in case they draw trumps and try to establish it for themselves.

Thus the leading hand, on appreciating that the Establishment Game would be trick-losing, could, by the second lead, show the general alternative tactics proposed, and the principle involved is so simple that there could usually be no room for misunderstanding.

THE SINGLETON LEAD.

Hoyle advocates that with weak trumps a singleton may be led *even originally.* He says:—

"If only one card of any suit and but two or three small trumps, lead the single card."

Cavendish says:—

"The original lead of a singleton is in no case defensible."

The word *original* in the above has the highest significance; undoubtedly the strong suit should generally be led from first, and the shortest plain

suit should often then follow if a forward game of establishment cannot be undertaken.

The clear exponent of the present American system of leads, Mr. C. E. Coffin, in his work *The Gist of Whist*,[1] says (p. 24) :—

"Lead a singleton *never* as an original lead. A singleton may be led later if weak in trumps."

Pembridge, in the earlier part of his work, *Whist or Bumblepuppy*, denounces the original lead of a singleton ; but later on, in a footnote on page 96, he says :—

"Matthews, with considerable limitations, advocates leading singletons. Now-a-days the practice is decried, but I regret to say that, as far as my experience goes, the principal obstacle to leading a singleton is not having a singleton to lead."

Mr. Milton C. Work says, at page 93 :—

"Many players think they make a very foxy play when they lead a winning face card in their long plain suit, and then jump to a singleton, hoping for a ruff. Of course this play often produces a gain, but it does so at a great risk," etc.

Such play as the above usually pays, however, if you are weak in trumps. Your partner would generally be able to secure a lead or two before your trumps could be wholly drawn, and would then promptly give you the chance of ruffing with your otherwise useless trumps.

[1] *The Gist of Whist*, by C. E. Coffin. Published at Brentano's, New York, U.S.A.

Those who advocate the universal lead of the long suit *to the extent of its full establishment before they have ascertained that this strategy suits the combined game*, cordially dislike a singleton lead, because it cuts across their signalling and echoing and marking of cards.

Mr. Howell[1] shrewdly says :—

"I believe in the long suit game when [and only when] it will probably, or with a reasonable degree of probability, do what it is intended to do—namely, establish and bring in the long suit. Establish and *bring in*, mind you. We short-suiters don't care a fig about merely clearing a suit; we must also do some business afterward in order to gratify our covetous inclinations. We would rather take tricks in a suit without establishing it, than establish it without taking tricks."

But with reference to the above it must be fully recognised that the lead out of a short suit will sometimes enable *the adversaries* quickly to establish it, and perhaps finally *to gain tricks in it.*

A main issue for consideration, therefore, stands : *Will the ruffing you may secure probably be more profitable to the combined game than the assistance you may render opponents as regards establishment?* I think the answer to this is *Yes*, because your ruffing is all clear gain, whereas the adversaries would only occasionally derive establishment benefit from your lead of your short suit.

Mr. Milton C. Work, at page 128, lays down that

[1] *Whist Openings*, by E. C. Howell, Boston, U.S.A.

it is an advantage *at once* to return your partner's suit:—

"When you have but one card remaining in it, are weak in trumps, and are desirous of ruffing."

And at page 129:—

"The fourth hand on winning the trick should *at once* return the suit through the original leader if he has 'but one card left of the suit led, is weak in trumps, and desires to ruff.'"

Surely such a return lead as the above is wholly analogous to the lead of a singleton. The lead of the singleton, however, at the period I have indicated, viz., next after declaration of the long suit, involves and guides important combined strategy of the entire hand; whereas the return lead in that direction, viz., of a single remaining card, which Mr. Work rules to be sometimes advisable, is but a secondary effort as wrung from weakness.

Hoyle seems even to think that the lead of a singleton gives *the partner* the best trick-making chances in the suit. He says:—

"It gives your partner an equal chance of having a better card in it than the last player; whereas, had he led that suit to you, which is probable had been his strong suit, the adversaries would have made the discovery of your attempting a saw, they would trump out, and so prevent your making your small trumps."

Undoubtedly, as Hoyle advances, your singleton, by being led, may do your partner good service. It is better for him than if he be left to

work the suit by his own leads alone, because one of the opponents' hand is led through by you, instead of both of them being led up to by him.

If your partner has shown trump strength by *calling* or by leading trumps, and you hold a singleton together with weak trumps, it is a winning policy on first getting the lead to play your singleton; your partner would then give you the opportunity for a ruff or two, and hold back his good cards in your short suit.

The greatest drawback to the lead of a singleton at any stage of the play is that you thereby publish your poorness in trumps, but this drawback almost disappears when your partner declares strength in them.

But is the *original* lead of a singleton really disadvantageous under *some other* conditions of cards held? I venture to think *not*, and very frequently one holds a hand where the *original* lead of a singleton will gain by ruffing the fifth trick required to save the game when the opponents are holding two by honours and require three by tricks to win.

On ruffing after your singleton lead, you have choice of two plain suits to lead for your partner to win a trick in; it is, therefore, about even chances that he can win, and give back to you for a second ruff. The idea that your partner will mistake your first lead to indicate such great strength in the suit as to warrant him in plunging into a trump lead on that account is an exaggerated one. He would, indeed, be a risky player if he thus hastily jumped

to such a conclusion. He would often, from his own hand, be able shrewdly to guess that you are leading a singleton, and would promptly give back a tentative return lead of a strengthening or winning card in the suit to ascertain.

When you happen to hold a singleton together with weakness in trumps, and do not lead out your singleton, it often happens that there is sufficient trump strength elsewhere to cause trump-drawing to be started, and thus you never get a chance of a ruff; but on the other hand, if you are able to make a ruff through numerical weakness in a plain suit without having invited it, your opponents are not thereby assured of your trump weakness as they are when you lead a singleton, and they do not so freely venture on trying to draw your trumps.

Why should the original lead of a singleton be looked upon as almost a shady performance, and by some be classed with "Potting the White" at billiards? It is in truth a most spirited lead. It is made because you have not in your hand the amount of brute force sufficient to meet your adversaries on equal give-and-take terms, and it sets up their bristles to such extent that they will frequently rush rashly to a trump lead to the great satisfaction of your partner if he may happen, as is very likely, to hold a good share of the trumps.

Moreover, with a careful partner you cannot very well *lose* anything by the singleton lead; you will probably have made one small trump by ruffing before your weakness is discovered by your op-

ponents, and that is a great matter where your hand is so poor as to render it likely that the saving of the game hangs on the gaining of such a trick.

It is submitted, therefore, that in Whist of the Future the *original* lead of a singleton will not be tabooed quite as it has been hitherto.

* * * *

Mr. Milton C. Work advances as regards the American leads at page 52—

"It is claimed for this system of leads that it is the most perfect ever conceived by the mind of man."

Yet in the April number, 1896, of the American magazine *Whist*, Mr. R. F. Foster, who has achieved a Whist reputation perhaps second to none in America, writes—"The long-suit game is rotten."

Mr. R. F. Foster is doubtless correct in declaiming the long *suit game when pressed to ends and continued in hands where it is not applicable.* There are hands in which the long-suit system may best be pursued, and hands where the short-suit system, promptly adopted, will give trick-winning results. When not strong in trumps the alternative capabilities and possibilities of the hand should be shown to one's partner as quickly as possible in the order before indicated, as a rule giving the long-suit programme the first place; you will thereby get your strategy soon in the field. The original lead thus becomes an advantage which often fully counterbalances the average value of the trump card turned up.

CHAPTER VII

Lead Strategy of the Future (continued).

The American leads further discussed.—Successes by ruffing in short suits as compared with those gained by bringing in Long Cards.

WITH further reference to the American leads—if you have A, K, Q, & J, you are told that with *four* in suit you must lead *King* and follow with *Jack*; with *five* in suit you lead *Jack* and follow with *Ace*; with *six* in suit you lead *Jack* and follow with *King*; with *seven* in suit you lead *Jack* and follow with *Queen*.

Now with such a very strong plain suit in one's hand it is generally unwise to publish extreme details *before one knows how the trump strength is distributed, and also what strategy may suit one's partner and receive adequate support from him.*

It is, of course, 2 to 1 that opponents may first run short and have the chance of trumping this strong suit, and it is also quite certain that if the great strength and length be shown early in the hand both opponents will take special measures—*i.e.* they will, if either be strong enough, draw trumps and bring in a suit of their own, and you may have the vexation of seeing the proclaimed

high and long cards fall to it, or, should the hand on the right of the long-suit proclaimer fail in that suit, the hand to left may secure the lead and confidently give the suit for a ruff or two.

There is never practically much to be gained by such number indicating variations in leads as those above quoted; Cavendish remarks on this at page 30 of *Whist Developments*. He says:—

"In actual play it will seldom be of much use to show the precise number of small cards remaining, when such great commanding strength is led from, and the leader has more than five cards in the suit."

"What is particularly insisted on is, that the leader is not to go on with the K or Q [after he has first led Knave, holding A, K, Q, etc., also] when he led from exactly five cards."

The great thing for a player to be informed and satisfied about is *that his partner has a strong suit wherein he can certainly gain a trick at any time when led to.*

If with A, K, Q, J, you play out the King and follow with Queen, he knows that you have still remaining the command of that suit with the Ace, and that is enough information for his immediate purposes; he will with that much in his mind then perhaps try to show you his own suit, leaving you to go on with yours when you consider it advisable. You had better not show the minor and utmost details of your long-suit resources before you have ascertained that there is probability of *bringing in* that suit later on. If your hand contains strength enough to give reasonable hope of bringing in your

long suit, you may always advantageously show that you hold five cards in the suit by one of the following recognised leads:—1st, A followed by any card except Q. 2nd, Q followed by K when holding K, Q, and three small cards. 3rd, Q followed by 10 when holding Q, J, 10 with two small cards. 4th, J followed by A when holding a quart Major and one small card, or Q followed by A when holding a tierce Major with two small cards. 5th, J followed by K when with K, Q, J and two small cards. 6th, 10 followed by J when with K, J, 10 and two others. 7th, the penultimate from all other arrangements of five in suit.

Many sound players prefer that the J or penultimate should be originally led from the combination given above as 6th.

Bringing in long cards pays better than anything else when it comes off, and it very often is a doubtful point at the early part of the play of the hand how far one should adopt and *follow on* strategy to that end. You must remember that the short-suit leads sometimes give very important *quick* returns, and when you can see that the game is *saved*, you are free to start on new and bolder lines of aggression with a cheery heart.

Mr. E. C. Howell lays down :—

"The ruffing game *per se*, apart from its supporting qualities, calls for quick action. Partner having bid for it, don't start another suit yourself until you have got out of the ruff all there is in it."

If before leading for your partner's ruff, you can

safely indicate to him another plain suit in which you could gain the lead for giving him a second opportunity also, as by leading out a K from A, K, the trick-winning results are often increased thereby; also when strong in trumps, you should, if holding but two or three of the commanding cards in your strong plain suit, which your partner ruffs, lead him a small card and retain your high ones—it can do the combined game no harm for him to expend his small trumps, and you will finally, with the help of your own long trumps, the more surely bring in fully the suit you have held up.

With regard to results: if the trick-making value of the Long-suit and the Short-suit Systems may be for judgment from the aid given each by trumps—*i.e.* the Long-suit from the cards made to win by trump-drawing and forcing the strongest opponent; and the Short-suit by the ruffing early in the hand of adverse winning cards with small and otherwise useless trumps—many players would maintain that ruffing has really paid best. The long-card programme, as held to be persistently applicable, has perhaps of late years been accorded too much adoption; it has been prosecuted for all sorts and conditions of hands, and the short-suit successes have been treated almost as lucky piracies. When a long card or two may have laboriously, at the end of the play of a hand, won tricks, there has been gratulation; but these successes may hardly exceed in number those secured earlier by trumping, and

these last-named would be greatly increased if the habit of following on with a long-suit game when it is showing little chance of ultimate benefit had not been advocated by some writers, who seem reluctant to accord the short-suit system any important part in Whist strategy.

CHAPTER VIII

Lead Strategy of the Future (continued).

Selection of card to lead from some combinations.—From K, Q.—From K, J, 10.—Sequence Cards.

AN original lead from a plain suit containing only King, Queen, and small cards, is always liable to be disadvantageous. If you lead out the King so as to ensure that the Queen shall make in the second round, you are not, with one trick only secured in the suit, getting the full average value of these two high face cards, and after making the Queen in the second round you may with but that one trick gained, hand the command of this originally strong suit entirely over to your opponents.

It is hardly necessary to say that with K and Q and one small card you should not lead the suit at all unless as a forced lead; with four, or five, or even six in the suit you should lead a small card, originally provided you have trump strength in your favour, for you may then have fair hope of bringing in your long small cards, and this you could not so well ensure if you freely lose your King by leading it out to draw the Ace in the first round.

Shortly put: if you lead out King, it is 2 to 1 the Ace will capture it. If you hold it back, it is probable that it will eventually make; moreover, with strength in trumps it is of great importance that you should also hold up your Queen as a commanding card for the third round of your strong plain suit, and this third round often leaves your small cards in the suit as "long cards." To lead out King from a suit of King, Queen, and small cards is frequently a sacrifice, except where you wish to make certain as quickly as possible of one trick only in that suit, and can give up all other chances in it for that result, or where your suit is so long and strong that you may expect establishment of it in two rounds.

* * * *

In the *Philadelphia Evening Telegraph* of February 8th, 1896, appears the following:—

"The leads of fourth best from King, Jack, Ten, and of Ten from Queen, Jack, Ten, have gained another, and this time a most important convert. Miss Kate Wheelock, the *Whist Queen*, now advocates these leads and teaches them to her advanced pupils. No whist innovation was ever taken up so universally by the thinking and conservative element of players in so short a time. It shows the difference between the Whist-players of this country and England; here, when a good thing comes along it is eagerly taken up; there, changes, no matter how trick-winning, are unwelcome and unconsidered."

The lead of ten from King, Jack, and ten has become a weak lead on the *over-information* lines.

With Ace and Queen apportioned between them the opponents, knowing what the lead of the ten plainly indicates, win two tricks for certain, and one of them will be very likely to trump the third lead of that suit. Moreover, with a 10 led from K, J, 10, the second hand holding A, Q could with safety put down the Q—or if he holds the Q singly guarded he would put down the Q with an even chance of winning the trick. If the suit of King, Jack, 10 be led from, the card played should be small if there be trump strength at back; but if not, the Jack would draw the Ace from the second player more often than does the ten.

One's partner would probably hold *either* the A, Q, or 9, and thus would with a small card led freely unblock and assist in establishment. If short in the suit the partner would later trump the adverse winning cards should these be held up.

* * * *

As regards the lead from Q, J, 10, the issue entirely rests with the number of cards you hold in the suit; if you have only these three cards, or a small one added, lead out the Queen, because you would wish your partner to hold up his King or Ace, and your lead of Q indicates this; but if you have five or more in the suit you would probably do just as well to lead the ten, because your partner would then perhaps play his Ace or King and so unblock for you.

The present American lead from the combina-

tion Q, J, 10, is Q, followed by J, if holding four cards in the suit, and Q followed by 10 if holding more than four; this play, however, sometimes delays establishment on account of the partner holding up his A or K to Q led when these had better be got out of the way quickly. If it might be clearly recognised that the lead of 10 *always* shows presence of Q, J and at least two small cards, and that this lead shows *no other combination whatever*, the third hand having A might at discretion hold it up in the first round, just as when the Q is led, in hope of catching the King if that face card may happen to be lying second hand; at all events, the third hand would know his partner's suit by the very first lead, whereas at present he only gets details when the J or 10 is led for the second round.

There may arise objection to the lead of 10 on the above-named lines as being too informatory to adversaries; it would, perhaps, on that account only prove trick-winning when backed by trump strength or sufficient power of re-entry.

* * * *

SEQUENCE CARDS.

It may here be convenient to speak of the general principle which influences the lead from sequence cards. For the most simple case, as with a sequence headed by the Ace; when the King is first led, and on winning is followed by the Queen, you show that you still retain the highest, and your

partner understands your reserved command of that suit accordingly.

But when you have a high card sequence which is not headed by the Ace, the conditions of your lead depend wholly on the number of cards you hold in sequence and in the suit.

With two of such high cards in sequence and not more than one other of the suit, you are told (if forced to open the suit) to lead out the highest because it is a strengthening card for your partner who will probably let it pass, and at the same time this lead helps to clear the suit for your own hand.

But there is an important exception to this lead of Q from Q, J, and one small card, or of J from J, 10, and one small card, and that is when you wish to establish in your hand a re-entry card in the suit; in that case you should lead the small card and hope your partner will give adequate assistance.

With three or more high cards in sequence and not less than *five* cards as the total in the suit, the lead of the lowest of the sequence often makes your partner, who does not know at your first lead-off for certain how the other cards lie, unblock by playing out any higher card he may hold, and thus he will not stand in your way if trumps may be drawn and you have your chance of bringing in the suit.

With American leads sequence cards are *jumped*, as before referred to, in order to declare the pre-

cise number of cards in suit; thus with A, K, Q, J, 10, you are told to lead J, and then A, with A, K, Q, J, 10, 2, to lead J, then K: with K, Q, J, 10, 2, to lead J, and then K; with K, Q, J, 4, 3, 2, to lead J, and then Q.

This arrangement to show numerical strength is however in sacrifice of sequence information.

With good strength for combined operations it is best clearly to demonstrate to your partner the entire *span* of even a sequence in spot cards by playing both the lowest and the highest on the first safe and convenient opportunities; thus if you hold 10, 9, 8, 7, and third hand play the 7 as heading the trick, when you subsequently play the 10 your partner is assured that you hold the two intermediate cards.

* * * *

There are but two cards which, when led originally, can express forthwith to the table possession of not more than four in suit, viz., the K and the Q. The K led proclaims this fact conventionally, and the Q announces it from not being penultimate.

ERRATUM.

Page 91, last line but one and last line, For Q, read 2 (two).

partner understands your reserved command of that suit accordingly.

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* * * *

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CHAPTER IX

Lead Strategy of the Future (continued).

The lead from suit of Jack with two others.—The conditions which warrant a trump lead originally.—Tenderness towards one's partner's possibilities.—The crime of leading from weakness in trumps.—The lead from A, Q suit.

IN the forced lead from a suit of three cards, headed by Jack, it is sometimes advocated that you should lead out the Jack to show number, and with a view to strengthen your partner.

But in half the cases, such a strengthening card proves a difficulty to him; he finds it hard to decide whether he should put down his Ace or his King, or let the Jack pass; and when he lets it pass, he often sees the trick lost to the Queen, and feels that the predicament in which he was placed could hardly have been the outcome of sound, combined Whist. Should he play his big card on his partner's Jack, and win the trick, he has qualms that the trick might quite likely have been gained had he allowed the Jack to pass.

Such difficulty would be obviated if the Jack were given his proper status as an honour, and the small card led in this emergent opening of a suit of three thus headed.

Usually at the stage of the game when you lead from a Jack with two small, your partner would have gathered some inkling of your all-round weakness, and would specially study his own game in his play. If, on your leading a small card, his King or Queen might be beaten, your protected Jack would still be a valuable card, and, with your otherwise poor hand, might become extremely serviceable as perhaps enabling you to gain a trick that would allow you to give a later lead which your partner might specially desire, or that would otherwise be very advantageous.

* * * *

The important question of the strength which warrants a trump lead early in the play of the hand has been much discussed by Whist authorities.

Professor Pole, in his work, *The Theory of Whist*, says:—"Whenever you have five trumps, whatever they are, or whatever the other components of your hand, *you should lead them*."

I have seen so many games lost by leading trumps from five, that I submit that the above rule seems too sweeping. Even when you hold five trumps, it does not follow that you should always draw from your partner his power of making one or two tricks by ruffing. How often, after the regulated lead from five trumps, does one get the reproach: "Ah, partner, if you had not drawn my trumps, I could have helped you by ruffing your small card suit, and so won the game." It is certainly true

that, with five trumps, a trump lead is generally best for the greatest success of one's *own* hand; also you thereby prevent the opponents from trumping your strong plain suit, and you may, with your long trump get command late in the play and give your partner the plain suit lead he wishes for. All that is great argument indeed; yet, practically, I believe it pays best before persistently drawing trumps to the end to try to ascertain whether your partner cannot ruff some suit, and so allow you to hold back your strong cards therein, and then when a little later the best time arrives for prosecuting the trump lead, you would, with your partner's trumps already made, draw two to one. What I have submitted is much open to question, for it may be that the opponents will be able to make a ruff or two which could not have been done had trumps been vigorously drawn from the first; one would, however, generally get an early inkling of the probability that way; and even if the adverse ruff be made, you may thereby be left with one long trump the more! It is most important to recognise that when you are so strong in trumps as to have the power to draw them, *every ruff by your partner is a clear gain of a trick, whereas every ruff by an opponent may tend towards strengthening your already strong trump hand.*

Therefore it is clear that with trump strength, it is often very advantageous to try to give your partner an opportunity of making his otherwise useless trumps by ruffing. With five moderate or

small trumps you should not originally prosecute a trump lead unless you have other suits fairly protected, or can pretty surely bring in two long cards.

Great tenderness towards one's partner's possibilities certainly pays, and unless one has a very grand game in one's own cards a partner's trumps should not generally be fully drawn until his resources in the other suits may, to some extent, have been ascertained.

Even should you, when holding five trumps, happen to be obliged to ruff, you may comfort yourself by the fact that, as you have not previously declared trump strength, your opponents will probably conclude you are weak therein, and *trump out*, as Hoyle expresses it, with the hope of exhausting you; they will thus, perhaps, catch a Tartar.

* * * *

There seems no Whist lead so worrying to a sound player as the partner's lead from weakness in trumps; it upsets his game, and is, as an early lead in the hand, and without signal for it, entirely inexcusable. If *Blue Peter* be signalled, you must, however, under the present practice, obey orders, and with weakness in trumps, still lead out your best one forthwith; but in any other case a lead from weakness in trumps, except to stop the opponent's cross ruff, constitutes play *against* your partner.

It is unwarrantable (if you have an alternative) to lead from a suit so destitute of high cards as

to kill your partner's King or Queen, without substantially promoting cards remaining in your own hand; his King or Queen, if left alone by you, would probably win a trick in due course.

Cavendish has spoken of "Partners who sometimes open the hand with the ridiculously bad strengthening Queen, from Queen and another. [It should be called weakening Queen]." He knocks one of the worst leads of poor players a hard blow, for such a lead is of little use to the partner, unless he may happen to hold the King, and it is 2 to 1 against that; and it is much greater odds in favour of it lending help to establishment of the adversaries' suit.

* * * *

The original lead from a plain suit headed by Ace with Queen, does not differ from the regulation lead in a suit headed by the Ace alone; *i.e.*, if you have four in the suit, lead a small card; if holding five or more, lead Ace and then a small card. It would not be for consideration to lead a suit thus headed if you have numerical weakness in it.

In any case, where one trick might be important, as saving or winning the game, the lead would be ruled accordingly, and the Ace would, of course, be first played. *With power to draw trumps* and then to obtain re-entry, a small card of the A, Q suit would always first be led, unless your partner has the greater numerical strength therein, and you desire to unblock.

CHAPTER X

Lead Strategy of the Future (continued).

Calling for a lead through an honour turned up.—The trump-showing lead.

IN dealing with original leads, it is essential to treat of difficulty occasioned by an honour being turned up on one's right. Now where the considerations as regards leading a trump are rather evenly balanced, the sight of an honour turned up to the opponent who plays last may stop the strategy one would have liked to adopt. To lead *up* to that honour may be knocking one's head against a brick wall, whilst on the other hand, if one's partner would but lead *through* it, the very tactics desired would be started.

But how are you to let your partner know that you wish him to lead through the honour? If you are yourself so strong in trumps as to render a trump lead advisable, it is probable that he is not strong enough to make this his own original lead, unless so invited by you. If he should wait for you to signal *Blue Peter*, this may cause loss of important time as regards putting into operation the best plan of combined attack. You cannot say in words, "Please lead through that honour!"

Yet your request should be wholly conveyed by the first card you play.

In America, with an honour turned up, it is understood that if the original leader shall make an *irregular* lead, this gives command to his partner to lead through the honour on the first opportunity.

An *irregular* lead means the lead of a card in its wrong order, *i.e.* in other order than laid down by the principles of ordinary American leads.

Now it is clear from this definition that there must always be at least two rounds of a suit before one's partner could be sure that the lead first made *is* an irregular one, because there are conditions under which the original lead of *any* card in the pack may be quite regular and correct. This fact almost entirely upsets and nullifies the value of the signal as conveyed by an irregular lead.

If there *must* be signalling by the card played, it had better be so clear and direct as to admit of no misunderstanding, and it should also, if possible, be of a nature that one lead only shall fully announce what is wanted.

Therefore, with an honour turned up on the right, the *first* lead of the 2, 3, 4 or 5 in *any* plain suit might be universally accepted as indicating that a lead through that honour is requested.

There is no beating about the bush in such a signal. If you do not desire the honour to be led through, you can quite surely find a card to lead originally which is higher than a 5. As a means

for making the call you would nearly always have a 2, 3, 4 or 5 in your *strongest* plain suit.

It is so much the custom with ardent advocates of signalling to try to prove that their signals are but far-sighted natural inferences and deductions, that I trust my effort that way as given below may be favourably received by them.

Thus stands my proposition and argument :—

Firstly. You want lead made through the honour turned up to your right.

Secondly. For that purpose you try forthwith to give your partner the lead.

Thirdly. You therefore don't commence by leading your own face cards, or fourth best, or a strengthening card, because he might possibly pass any of these without attempt to win.

Fourthly. But your lead of 2, 3, 4 or 5 could be interpreted in no other way than that you wish him to try to win the trick, and the honour lying displayed under his nose (a little to his left) would clearly convey to him what he must do next.

These be inferences! No signalling by the card led could be more simple and legitimate than as above described.

* * * *

Trump showing leads have been adopted to some extent by American Whist-players; the idea is to signal by the high card one first leads of a

plain suit the number of trumps held in the hand. One would think that the information might more conveniently and plainly be given by leading a card with pips corresponding to the number of trumps held; or failing holding such low card, by allowing the 7 to do duty for the number 2, the 8 for the 3, and 9 for the 4. With duplicates thus provided for the purpose, one would be sure to have a numerical trump-showing card. But is such trump-showing expedient? It surely stands to reason that if you are not strong enough in trumps to lead them, it would be a most dangerous thing off-hand to inform the whole table of the exact number you hold! The chances are 2 to 1 that one of your opponents may hold the strongest trumps of the other three hands, and publication of your precise resources when failing commanding strength in trumps is but an announcement to your disadvantage.

"*Signals have come to stay*," say many Whist-players. If any leader's signal could stay, it would be such an one as calls for a lead through the honour turned up by the original lead of a very low and valueless card in a plain suit.

For the signals which are made by other players than the leader, see Chapter XIV.

CHAPTER XI

Play of the Second Hand in Whist of the Future.

The attack on American leads by the second hand.—Play of false cards.

WHERE players adopt the lead of the fourth best, and trump-showing leads, etc., the information thus openly given will enable the second hand to take up opposition tactics to a greater extent than hitherto done by that hand; and this fact must be recognised as a serious objection to some information leads.

Cavendish, the highest Whist authority, has for the past thirteen years been in favour of the American leads; but in his work, *Whist Developments*, he points out that they are not successful where the combined hands making use of them are weak. He says as regards this exception :—

"It is only true that these leads may be of assistance *to opponents* who hold very strong cards; it is then undoubtedly to their [the opponents'] advantage to be able to place the unplayed cards."

With the lead of the fourth best from opponents, the second hand can often calculate closely from the cards in his own hand those of importance which may remain divided between his left-

hand adversary and his partner. He can thus sometimes play to win, or finesse to great advantage, or hold back with trick-making result.

For example :—

The lead is a seven ; your hand (second hand) is A, Q, 10 and 8 ; you can with perfect safety put down your eight to win the trick, because you *know* from the fourth best information lead that the high cards not in your own hand must *all* be held by the original leader, *i.e.* that he held K, J, 9 and 8.

The above simple case is a typical one, admitting of extensive variation and application, and the old-time maxim of *second hand play low*, or play the lowest of a sequence, would be modified to "*second hand should calculate how he can most profitably arrange to cover the card led, or to hold back over the three high cards advertised by the original lead of his right hand opponent.*"

Also the value of the card led will greatly affect the question of what to play second hand when holding an honour and only one other card of the suit.

With most players there is reluctance to unguard an honour at second hand. With King or Queen and but one small card, the play of the small card often leaves the honour bottled up to fall in the second round to the superior card in the hand of the original leader, and that is a poor prospect.

Now with the original leader declaring details of his strongest suit, your King or Queen should, if played second hand, stand an even chance of

winning, and I believe that you will probably, therefore, get better trick-making value as regards *immediate* result by playing the honours to a moderately high card led. The *full-information* advocates have in this predicament of holding an honour singly guarded stood by the policy of concealment. They point out that if you put on the honour second hand you at once expose your weakness and enable the original leader to finesse against you on the second round: but as

ERRATUM.

Page 102, line 10,
For 8, read 7.

fair chance of getting the lead at the early time when declaration of strategy is very important; and that you enable your partner to hold back in the suit in which you show yourself to be numerically weak; your left hand opponent could not subsequently give your partner more than a single lead through for a chance of adverse finesse by the original leader, because you would stand as last player with a ruff.

Also as regards the question of exposure of weakness: it must be remembered that if you pass, the third hand has an equal chance with your partner of winning the trick, and thus fully showing up your partner's weakness in addition to the exposure of yours which must shortly follow.

Undoubtedly the great disadvantage of putting

hand adversary and his partner. He can thus sometimes play to win, or finesse to great advantage, or hold back with trick-making result.

For example :—

The lead is a seven; your hand (second hand) is A, Q, 10 and 8; you can with perfect safety put down your eight to win the trick, because you *know* from the fourth best information lead that the high [illegible] in your own hand must *all* be held by [illegible]

hand should [illegible] *arrange to cover the card led, or to hold back over the three high cards advertised by the original lead of his right hand opponent.*"

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Also as regards the question of exposure of weakness: it must be remembered that if you pass, the third hand has an equal chance with your partner of winning the trick, and thus fully showing up your partner's weakness in addition to the exposure of yours which must shortly follow.

Undoubtedly the great disadvantage of putting

down the singly guarded honour second hand is that, *if beaten by the third player the suit is generally practically established for the leader's hand in the first round of it*, whereas if you hold the honour back you keep up concealment for awhile, for if the third player may win the trick he would probably lead from his own strong suit before returning that of his partner. This last-named disadvantage, viz., by playing the honour aiding to promptly establish the opponent's suit, is certainly a *very* strong one.

All points considered, I believe the following to be the best rule:—If the second hand may be weak in trumps, and see his best chances to be by ruffing, he should with any honour (except the ace) and but one other in the suit cover with his honour; his partner will then scheme to give a chance for a ruff, for the fall of the cards would usually explain the situation to him.

The information conveyed by your play of the honour would thus be recognised as a timely declaration of strategy.

Of course with Ace and one other, the Ace would never be played second hand unless to cover an honour, or for some very exceptional reason; but, as above referred to, the King, Queen, or Jack might, when accompanied by only one other card, be advantageously played second hand when it would best suit you to ask your partner for a chance of a ruff as being the way in which you could most likely help the score.

When a J is led and you hold K or Q you should not cover, because the other two honours are in hands playing after you. When holding *both* K and Q you cover the J led; and with A and more than one small you also cover. When having the A and Q you put on the A because you know that the J could not have been led from the combination of K, Q, J, but that it *must* be the highest card held by the leader in that suit, so that the K is certainly in one of the two hands behind you.

When trumps are led, the play of the second hand is influenced greatly by the probable chance of a winning cross ruff, or a ruff to the weaker in trumps of himself or partner. In those cases the second hand would often win the trump led, in order to give his partner the timely opportunity of ruffing, or else with a view to lead a plain suit in which his partner might win a trick in order to lead back the suit which he himself (the second hand) desires to trump.

It is sad to touch on the terribly distressing, deceptive and false play now being begotten of the over-information system of leads.

Mr. Milton C. Work stands high as a close reasoner in proving the great advantages claimed for the American leads; he points out how essential it is that reliable information should be freely given by selection of the card to be played; yet at page 95 of *Whist of To-day* he advocates play second hand of false cards in the opponent's suits. He says:—

"The writer firmly believes that with such combinations as Ace, King; King, Queen; or Queen, Jack second hand, considerable advantage may be obtained by frequently playing the higher rather than the lower of the respective sequences. Of course a player should not always play a false card under such circumstances. To make his play truly deceptive he should vary it, so as to keep his opponents guessing whether the play is false or not."

No doubt what Mr. Work lays down above is often trick-winning; but then if the cleverly devised rules for play, with illustrative hands showing numerical marking of cards, are admitted in important practical cases to fail before deceptive opposition tactics, the question naturally suggests itself as to whether the principle of "Deception" may not be for extension and perhaps for formulating just as systematically as the signalling leads which have rendered the deceptive play a necessity.

As regards play to *opponents'* suits, it may be advanced:—*Deceive your adversaries as much as possible in these; if they play fourth best, take careful note for your own guidance of the information they give, and mislead them in their deductions by the cards you play.*

But when thus resolving on attempts to mislead adversaries, the question of involved deception to your partner must be most carefully considered; this issue must be regulated by your strength and by the fall of the cards, and there should be a keen look-out for the moment when you may with advantage show him that your temporary false play

was but lawful and laudable strategy for the confusion and defeat of number-showing tactics.

With the game working round in your favour you drop deception, and revert to the simple and recognised combined operations advocated by Mr. James Clay, Dr. Pole, and other authorities.

In the thoroughly gentlemanlike game that Whist is, one feels regret that deceptive play should be greatly introduced. The word *deceit* is not a pleasant one; of course, however, it is here but used in connection with such *ruses* or *artifices* as may be perfectly legitimate in hostile operations whether at Whist or War.

For the weaker side to beguile the enemy into an ambush, to mislead him as to numerical strength, or as to the location of the various components of the force at command, may seem but a lawful exercise of strategical judgment.

The attempt to convey by the cards played the utmost detailed information to one's partner may be fitly and fairly met by every effort on the part of adversaries to play *their* cards so as to destroy these advertised lines of communication and assault.

CHAPTER XII

Play of the Third Hand.

Non-finesse if holding Ace and Queen in your partner's suit.—Non-return of partner's original lead under certain contingencies.—Unblocking.

WHIST authorities have laid down the law that you should never finesse in your partner's original strong suit lead *except* when you hold A, Q, of the suit; but in that case you ought to finesse the Q. I have in vain tried to discover any sound reason advanced for this exception.

If the suit is to be treated as your partner's strong suit, and if you have A, Q, only or A, Q, and but one other, it appears that a finesse of Queen may be especially detrimental to prompt establishment of the suit.

The case of holding these two high cards is so common, and the issue so important, that I propose to submit the conditions in detail.

The leader would be sure to have four or five cards in his strong suit, almost certainly headed by the K or J, or perhaps holding both of them. Prompt establishment is what he has played for.

If the second hand should hold the King and

one or more small cards, he would play a small card and hold back his King; with the King and another still held up he blocks establishment.

The only reason for finessing the Queen third hand seems to be that the Ace shall, *perhaps* later on, catch the King *if* that card should happen to remain in the second hand; but the whole programme of quick establishment is sacrificed to such an idea as that. Even should the second hand hold the King,—and, considering that your partner led the suit, it is odds against this,—it is generally of more advantage to be *certain* of extracting it in the second round than to allow it to remain in opposition and as blocking the long suit after the second round.

If the King may happen to be with the fourth hand, the third hand would, by finessing the Queen, lose a trick at a very important stage of the game, and without showing establishment of his partner's suit; and that is a very great matter indeed, for the fourth player thereby secures opportunity for declaration of his own strategy earlier than he could otherwise have done; and moreover, the original leader, with his strong suit not established, still remains in doubt as to the position of the Ace.

Now this uncertainty to the original leader is obviated if the third hand, as holding Ace, Queen, and not more than one other, would to the first lead put down the Ace and lead back the Queen. By so doing he absolutely clears the suit to his

partner in two rounds. It is true that a trick is temporarily lost if the original second-hand player may happen to hold the King and so win the Queen thus led out; but balanced against this chance there remains the fact that you have promptly, at the second round, probably fully established your partner's long suit, and that you have by your play also informed him of your numerical weakness therein.

Further, by winning with the Ace you secure the power to show your own strong suit before you return the Queen to your partner, though you would not, of course, thus postpone leading back if you retained the Q unguarded.

There may therefore be hope that in Whist of the Future there will be *no* exception made as regards original non-finesse in a partner's *declared strong suit.* If your own strength in the suit—as, for instance, holding A, Q, J, and others—may warrant your at once adopting it as your own, you then, in taking it over, finesse as may be advantageous, and your partner would understand and loyally unblock to you accordingly.

Cavendish rules:—

"If ten or nine is led and you [third hand] hold A, Q only, you play A and return Q, and are marked with no more. If you hold A, Q, and one small, you play Q and return A."

But the above has reference specially to *unblocking*—the lead of 10 declaring possession of

K, J, 10, and the 9 being *fourth best.* What I wish to advance is that there should never be any finesse card played on a partner's original lead, though a strengthening card led by him would, of course, often be passed under finesse conditions.

* * * *

The third hand should bear in mind that his partner rarely for his own benefit wishes his *original lead* forthwith returned unless that lead may be a trump, or unless the return may be with a high strengthening or a winning card as assisting to complete the establishment of the suit. Very often the original lead is perforce but from a single face card held with three or four small ones. If the third hand may win the first trick, he should not adopt the narrow-minded policy of leading back at once, unless he wins with a high card and can play another good card to assist in establishment, or can hold back strength as declaring the suit to be his own strong one, or unless he has but one of the suit remaining, and, being weak in trumps, desires to ruff it.

Carefulness to avoid sacrifice of the high cards his partner has led from should be uppermost in the mind of the third-hand player when his own turn comes to lead.

Even the partner's trump lead should not always be returned by the original third hand in the arbitrary lines that some have laid down. If at the first round the third hand held but two or three

small ones, and thus did nothing towards clearing the high cards, he should sometimes, unless he sees that the lead was made to prevent ruffing, allow the question of trump-drawing under such conditions to rest with his partner and await further indication.

Mr. Milton C. Work has advanced that if the third hand holds K, Q, and two others in his partner's first declared strong suit, he may with advantage, if he intends to return the suit at once, put down the King (a false card) to the first trick, and, on winning, return a small one. The reason given in favour of this is that the original second hand adversary, if he may have but two in the suit, would at the third round from the first leader credit his own partner with the Queen, and so not trump.

That is true, but I submit that it is still a very unsound false play, and therefore a losing game in the end.

Here are the reasons :—

By playing your K third hand you clearly tell your partner that you have *not* the Q. On your leading back a small one your partner wins with the Ace ; and concluding that the Queen is certainly against him, is obliged to frame his strategy of the hand accordingly.

If he had not been told by your play of the King third hand that the Queen was certainly against, he would, with enough strength in trumps, perhaps adopt a trump lead at this second oppor-

tunity, especially on noting that his partner might, from his return of a small card, have four of the suit.

Whatever may be ruled to be expedient as regards play of false cards to circumvent the Information game, it may not in Whist of the Future be for adoption that the third hand shall thus mislead his partner in his declared suit at the very opening of the combined strategy.

Reverting to the question of lead back of the original third hand on winning a trick in his partner's suit, I think understanding as follows might obtain with trick-winning result :—(*a*) That if the third hand wins the trick and *forthwith* leads back a small card of the suit, his partner may conclude that he has no other, and desires to ruff; (*b*) the immediate lead back of a strengthening card should show three of the suit to have been held originally; (*c*) and the postponement of a lead back in favour of opening another suit would show that the original third hand considered, from his own cards, that the strategy of the combined hands required development also in another suit.

If the third hand, on winning the trick, should play out a trump, he would declare power to supplement his partner's strong plain suit by a forward game.

The third hand must always treat the lead of a strengthening card by his partner with great consideration. When it is clear that such a card led as the J, 10, or 9 is his partner's best in the suit,

he must often let it pass in finesse where he would not himself have played this card in finesse had his partner led a small one. The reason is plain :— When the partner originally leads a low card, the third hand understands that he is expected to do his utmost to aid towards clearing and establishing the suit *for his partner*; but when the strengthening card is led, the third hand must recognise that his partner has thus shown the utmost he is capable of doing, and he must himself therefore judiciously hold up reserves.

* * * *

UNBLOCKING.

Cavendish has in his advanced work, *Whist Developments*, thoroughly investigated and systematised the conditions of *unblocking*.

The scope for immediate commencement of unblocking by the third hand is very clearly defined. He only usually begins to do so in the first round when he holds exactly *four* cards of the suit, all of them being lower than the one originally led by his partner.

Suppose, for instance, his partner first leads an Ace, whilst third hand holds J, 9, 7, 4 ; the 7 is played to the A, and when another card of the suit is led, the third hand still holds up the 4 and puts down either the J or the 9, according as he may try to win the trick or have to throw a losing card. He must play a card higher than the 7 in order to avoid making a call for trumps. Also since the Ace led (unless followed by Q) shows at least five

cards in suit, the third hand would at the third round get rid of his J and still hold up the 4, unless either the second or the fourth hand had originally not held *any* of the suit.

The above comprises exemplification of the main issues involved in commencing unblocking on the first round of the partner's original lead.

When holding less than four cards in the partner's declared suit, you still try to hold up a small card whereby to give him re-entry later on, and play out your winning or supporting cards on the first safe or effective opportunity.

The illustrations of the conditions of unblocking given in *Whist Developments* are, as a matter of course, most accurately and instructively presented. They will form an important element in the game as it will be taught in its classic and best form; but the holding up or play out of false cards by opponents, and the doubt to the leader as to whether the presumed unblocker may hold 2, 3, or 4 cards of the suit (and this cannot be known for certain until the third round) will generally render the unreserved adoption of the system somewhat unpopular in actual play.

Mr. Milton C. Work says :—

"The majority of rules on unblocking are unnecessary, as no thorough Whist-player, with or without rules, will permit himself to block his partner's suit."

It certainly is a somewhat dangerous thing, as being liable to be misunderstood, to commence unblocking at the earliest stage possible, for the

leader may, on seeing rather high pip cards fall from you, conclude that you are running short, and should be given a chance for a ruff, and then find that the ruff is with the adversaries. Moreover, opponents would often deceive the long-suit leader on this matter by keeping back small cards. Also, before you unblock at all, you should be rather confident that the trick you will forego holding up for is of more importance in your partner's hand than in your own; your partner may wish to throw a lead to you for return to his tenace in another suit, or for other reasons, and may still have a trump or other card of re-entry to bring in his own long cards, and your blocking card may be the only one with which you could win; or you may have a long card of your own suit to play out, and have no other way of winning a trick than by the blocking card. Your partner would generally be pretty sure that the block card is with you, and is held up by you for a good reason.

Unblocking must practically remain almost entirely a matter dependent on Whist Perception and Observation, the careful study of the conditions being an important chapter in Whist education. In that direction carefully consider :—

1. Whether your partner's strength in the suit is great enough to warrant the waste of the possible blocking card.
2. Whether the blocking card would not later, if held back, help your partner to establish the suit.

3. Whether the blocking card would be likely *finally* to stop your partner in the play out of his long cards ; for it might *interim* get a lead for you, and enable you to do good service.

Many tricks are thrown away by over-generous and badly judged attempts at unblocking play, and the feelings are as sorely hurt by seeing that the unblocking has made a present of a trick to the adversary, as they are by being obliged to win a trick which had better have been won by the partner.

Inexperienced players should be very careful that their unblocking may not be for interpretation as a call for trumps. *Cavendish* gives the warning :—

"All unblocking play is liable to cause a careless leader to draw false inferences."

CHAPTER XIII

Play of the Fourth Hand.

With Ace, Jack, hold up sometimes to King led.—Blocking the adversary.—Signalling.—False Play.—Trumping adverse long cards.

THERE is the straightforward maxim that the fourth hand should, in the earlier part of the play at all events, win the opponents' trick if able to do so.

But perhaps in Whist of the Future the exceptions to this rule will be more numerous than heretofore.

There is one combination at present adopted as a lead, which is best under certain conditions treated with waiting tactics by fourth hand (and second hand). I allude to the lead of King, from K, Q, and two small cards, with the second or fourth hand holding A, J, and only one or two small ones.

With this last-named combination and also strength in trumps in the fourth (or second) hand, it almost invariably pays best to allow the King led to win. If the original leader should then venture on the suit a second time, you stand over him with the tenace, and also observe whether it is a suit that you (being strong in trumps) can give back to your

partner for a ruff; you *very* rarely would lose a trick in the end by thus allowing the led-out King to win, and you block the adversary and perhaps induce him promptly to lead out a trump in the thought that the Ace of his strong plain suit is with his partner; thus you rather spoil his strategy at the outset.

Having blocked your opponent's suit as above noted, it is manifest that either you or your partner may lead out trumps with more freedom than if the Ace had been played on the King led at the first round; the suit has become your own rather than your adversary's; you have little to fear in it, and with good cards in other plain suits and sufficient strength in trumps you can venture on a very forward game.

* * * *

The fourth hand will, with signals in force, perhaps more than any other be the hand for early signalling. Whereas the second and third hands may have to make effort to win a trick, or to play so as not to allow it to go cheaply, the play of the fourth hand has no uncertain signification; he either wins and then promptly shows his proposed strategy, or failing power to win, his partner notes the weakness and gathers some inkling from the value of the card thrown as to numerical strength remaining, or observes the call or non-call for trumps.

The strategical standpoint of the fourth hand is

often considered to be not much inferior to that of the original leader, because he gains by the play to the first trick knowledge as to his left-hand opponent's proposed programme, and can lose no valuable card in effort to win.

Mr. Milton C. Work is consistently strong also in his advocacy of false play in the opponent's suit. He says as regards fourth hand :—

"For example, holding K, Q, and one small card, and the play of one of the face cards being necessary to win the trick, it is often wise to take with the K, as the play of a false card may induce the original leader not to finesse if the suit is returned by his partner."

and further—

"The reputation of being in the habit of playing a false card in such a situation, may also be to a fourth hand player's advantage when he is not so playing."

All that seems a little counter to Clay's Doctrine ! Yet in truth, in writing the above in *Whist of To-day*, Mr. Work strikes a hard blow at the information system as now advocated. It is plain that if we adopt the principle of deception in the opponents' suits with low cards as well as with high ones, we spoil their marking of our own cards, and yet we have the advantage of noting in which adverse hand the important or long cards lie !

In Whist of the Future the systematic lead of Fourth best, the Trump-showing lead, etc., will doubtless be best opposed by play of false cards when there may not be strength enough to fully take aggressive

advantage of the information given, and at once to institute an opposition forward game.

* * * *

The fourth hand will not infrequently find it an advantage to win his partner's trick when the third hand has shown great weakness; on winning a trick thus, he often places the original leader in a very awkward position by a lead through him with either a strengthening or a low card, perhaps at the same time himself holding back the head card of the suit. The adverse strategy is thus sometimes disorganized early in the hand.

* * * *

Irresolution as regards trumping long adverse cards often loses tricks to fourth hand or second hand. Defective Whist memory sometimes shows up sadly where two or three long small cards remain with an opponent. To the first of these, when led out, the long or best trump is often held back; when another long small card follows, there is perhaps further dogged refusal to trump and consequent discard of a strong card; at the third lead the bothered non-reckoner, in desperation, does what he should have done at first, and trumps. Of course a *single* long plain suit card may be often passed with advantage by the hand holding the long or highest remaining trump, because it may be desirable to keep the lead in the same place, but it is rarely sound to hold back the trump where there may be two or three leads of adverse long cards.

It is best to trump at once if at all, and to give one's partner a chance of another suit, with the hope that the holder of the remaining long cards may not be able again to obtain the lead.

When you hold the winning trump, and expect with it to draw the inferior adverse remaining one, it naturally goes much against the grain to be forced to trump a small long card; the matter is one entirely for perception and judgment. It may pay to ruff with the best if the remaining smaller trump should lie with the adversary not holding long cards.

CHAPTER XIV

Signals.

The *Call for Trumps.*—If used, it should be as a *request,* not a *command.*—The *Echo of the call.*—The *Sub-Echo.*—The *Three-Echo.*—The *Four-Echo.*

Conventions.

Illustration of what is meant by these.—Unfairness of them.

THE most important recognised signal is the one which first of all came into practice, viz. : *Blue Peter*, or *Calling for trumps.* It was used by Whist-players, in its present application, nearly fifty years ago.

This signal is defined as "playing an unnecessarily high card." It is generally made in the lower cards, as by the play of the 4 or 5 before the 2 or 3, or it has been allowed to be made in the second, third, or fourth hand by play of a high sequence card before a lower one. Thus, if with Q, J, 10, a player not being leader plays the J before playing the 10, the subsequent play of the 10 would by the existing understanding constitute a *Call for trumps.*

Some one has lately objected to the definition quoted above, on the ground that you cannot call a low-pip card a "high" card; the definition, however, does not say that calling for trumps con-

sists in *playing a high card unnecessarily*, but it says putting down *an unnecessarily high card*, and that is quite a different matter; the 3 is a higher card than the 2, and is *unnecessarily high*, when the lower card would naturally be the one to play to a trick one cannot win.

Every Whist-player now understands *Calling for trumps*, yet it is a matter for note that the finest players only make use of this signal when having very great trump strength indeed, and in that case they would probably often do quite as well by judicious lead of a trump on first getting the opportunity. The reasons for the unpopularity of the Call are not hard to be arrived at. By making the Call, you inform your opponents of your great strength, and they, being plainly warned, will at once play to the score, and try to save the game; you also command your partner to abandon his own game entirely, and to lead out trumps forthwith; you direct him, without knowing his capabilities or supplementary powers, to immolate himself.

No player is often justified in thus throwing down the gauntlet to the table, unless he may hold the game almost for certain in his own hand, and in that case he would usually win it without the help of *Blue Peter*.

I believe that the *only* condition under which the Call for trumps may be especially trick-saving or profitable is: when the holder of a very strong trump hand is unable to get the lead as

quickly as his partner, and yet plainly sees that the adversaries are likely to bring in a ruff or a cross ruff; it is manifest that the Call may then be advantageous.

It is much better to give the Call when the lead is with the partner, than when this lies with the opponents; in the former case you get prompt response, whilst with an adversary in the lead every effort will be started to force you, or otherwise to circumvent your proposed forward game.

There is no doubt that if the *Call* or *Command* for trumps might be modified into a *Request*, thus supposed to be worded—"I should like a trump led, partner, if not very detrimental to your tactics, because the strength of my hand is great"—the signal might then be safely used more frequently than it now is. The partner would, with such an understanding, fully recognise the situation, but instead of forlornly leading out his 10, 7, and 3 of trumps, as he might happen to secure tricks, he would perhaps show his partner his numerically weak suit with the hope of ruffing ere his trumps might be drawn. As before noted, no strategy pays better than for the hand weak in trumps to get a ruff or two before the strong hand sets to work to draw them, because every trick secured thus is a clear gain. Calling for trumps *as a Command* will not be in favour in Whist of the Future. How often has that *Command* resulted in about five tricks having been laboriously won by the signaller's hand, the partner having wholly

sacrificed himself, and the opponents played false cards and held back judiciously. Given even as a "request," the signal has grave drawbacks, because it makes over such open information to adversaries, who will try to take full advantage of it. Either as a "request" or a "call" the signal would usually be considered cancelled, should the signaller get the lead and not further play out trumps, the exceptions to this being the holding of a strong tenace trump-hand (with perhaps an honour turned up on the right), specially demanding the leads from one's partner, or having been forced since making the Call.

Considering the deceptive play which is required to defeat very informatory leads, it will doubtless be recognised in Whist of the Future that the play by second or fourth hand of any face card before the one next below it in sequence shall *not* constitute a Call for Trumps.

Amongst players of moderate proficiency, there are many who are not so quick to observe the call for trumps on the part of either opponent, as they are to see it when made by their partner. This neglect is, however, a very grave matter, because when one of the adversaries obeys the call and leads a trump, *his* would be the hand credited with the trump strength, if the call from his partner had not been duly noticed; and any mistake as regards which of the two adverse hands holds long trumps may occasion loss of the game; it would be calamitous to force the weak adverse trump hand by mistake.

Mr. Work says he believes it "right to signal in any hand from which you would lead, provided the trump suit is headed by one of the three highest honours."

But this view would hardly be accepted by Whist-players generally. One would often give a tentative *lead* of trumps, when holding four of them, including an honour, together with other favourable cards; but it would be suicidal with this strength to *call* on a partner forlornly to lead out his highest of two or three if he might have no supporting honour; and following this line of argument, it may be that the partner should have the conditions of his own hand clearly defined under which he would be absolved from responding to his coadjutor's *Call* or *Request.*

It may be generally assumed that if the partner declines to ruff an uncertain trick, he holds numerical trump strength; and that if he refuses to safely ruff an adverse winning plain card, he gives a most emphatic call for trumps.

It is often advisable when, early in the hand, you have suspicion that an opponent is commencing a call, that you should win the trick if possible, and promptly change the suit; by thus doing you prevent this opponent's partner from being sure about the location of trump strength until later in the hand.

* * * *

The *Echo* of strength in trumps, as showing four of them, gives the partner who has *called* additional

confidence and important reciprocal information; it is not liable to the grave disadvantages of the original Call, because it is but a welcome return indication of power, and with trump strength thus declared in *both* hands, the weak adversaries have no great chance of doing themselves any good by forcing either. Opponents should be very keen on observing refusal to echo.

* * * *

Mr. Milton C. Work, in *Whist of To-day*, most clearly explains the other signals which are for the moment finding more or less favour. He says some of them are of considerable value.

Of the signals favourably mentioned by the above-named authority, and also spoken of by the magazine *Whist*, and in various books and newspapers which treat of the game, it is doubtful if any will be accorded a very prominent position in Whist of the Future.

THE SUB-ECHO.

The Echo to a call for trumps has been dealt with above. But a *Sub-echo* has also been introduced; *i.e.* when a player has not four trumps, and therefore cannot echo to his partner's Call, he may in the subsequent play of a plain suit make the echo therein, to show that he originally held *three* trumps. Now the fact of the lead of trumps having given way to something else would generally render it advisable to keep one's trump weakness concealed from the adversaries.

Moreover, to publish that one holds *three* trumps would often be very unwise as conveying information enabling the strongest opponent to draw trumps up to the point of exhausting these three, and then to force the hand of the caller.

* * * *

THE THREE ECHO.

The *Three echo* is said to be "of great value when the original leader has *six* trumps, his partner *three*, and each of his adversaries *two*."

It is a signal devised for showing the number of the trumps held by the partner of the long trump hand; the information is often more likely to be of value to adversaries than to the partner as very likely causing a draw of two trumps to one, to be made to the exact limit.

THE FOUR ECHO.

The *Four echo* was suggested by Mr. Work about sixteen years ago, and he still recommends it as a trick-winning device. It stands thus:—If you have a plain suit containing but three cards, none higher than the 8, you can show that you hold not less than four trumps by playing first the second best, secondly the highest, and thirdly the lowest.

But, as in the case of other signals, this one seems open to very grave objections; your partner may construe such play as an original intention to call for trumps which the fall of the cards led you

to nullify; or he may conclude, after you have played the two higher cards, that you had but those, and therefore give back the suit for a ruff; or your left-hand adversary, interpreting your weakness in the suit, may give an awkward lead up to your third small card; moreover, the knowledge that you hold four trumps might induce your adversaries to give you a force, and then to draw the other three.

* * * *

It seems unnecessary to treat of other signals in similar lines which have been advocated, for all are met by the same main objection.

It would not be fairly possible to make such signals as *Asking for trumps* and the *Echo* illegal, because a man may play whatever card he chooses; also, in *Unblocking*, a high card is often thrown away before a low one. The defeat and possible abolition of much of the signalling must be the outcome of conviction that fine Whist-players who understand all the recognised signals, but do not greatly practise them, have advantage in trick-winning over signallers who almost habitually expose precise details of their hands without getting any conceded in return.

* * * *

CONVENTIONS.

Professor William Pole, F.R.S., has in his standard treatise, *The Evolution of Whist*,[1] dealt

[1] *The Evolution of Whist*, by Professor William Pole, F.R.S. Published by Longmans, Green & Co., London and New York.

with the ethics of secret conventions between partners. He most temperately, but decisively, lays down that no players in partnership should have between them any understanding as regards what is meant by play of the cards which may not be generally known and recognised.

Cavendish holds the same opinion.

If two players who are likely to be in partnership at a Club or elsewhere, agree on the lead of certain cards signalling information not natural to their value or to the combinations wherein they come, they do not play true Whist, but only a game of *Dodgery*. *Private signals* would never be for acceptance or toleration in English Clubs, and it is impossible to conceive that any players could receive payment of points won by such measures.

I will give an example of what is meant by a secret signal:—Suppose two players agree beforehand that when either of them shall originally lead a 2, 3, or 4 in a plain suit, this is to show that he holds four or more trumps; or suppose they should agree that the original lead of a 7, 8, or 9 should signify holding not more than two trumps, and so on. It is quite manifest that the lead of the cards indicated has nothing whatever to do with true Whist principles, and nothing in play that is not based on these will ever be willingly accepted by players who are worthy of the name.

CHAPTER XV

Changing Suits.

Partners Working in Combination.

SOME writers have said, with reference to the earlier leads of the hand, "Do not change suits." This, as a maxim intended for almost universal application, is rather misleading. If you lead out from your long suit, which may be of but average long-suit strength, and find your partner holding only three or four small cards in it, it stands to reason that you must abandon that suit on account of being unable to establish it by your leads except at a very great sacrifice indeed. You must, on next getting the lead, try your partner in some other suit, perhaps best as changing tactics on lack of adequate support, lead from your shortest plain suit. He would quite understand the motive, and, in due course, might give you a chance for a ruff in the second suit led.

When you lead out from your strongest suit as hoping for some assistance in establishment from your partner, he should, if unable to help you, avoid return of it; he should recognise that he has not only done nothing to help you, but that the fact of your having led the suit and exposed his weakness

in it is a most detrimental matter, and that the suit would only be led by you again in case you, as original leader, have sequence cards which would, single-handed, ensure eventual establishment and final success, compensating for loss to adverse higher cards at first.

Often, however, when you see that there is no reasonable chance of bringing in your long suit, you may still find it expedient to go on with it if your partner can make a profitable ruff or two; note of the weak cards played by him would usually inform you of the chance of this.

You should, as a rule, unless wishing to force a strong adversary, change a suit as soon as you have established it, or, when the weakness of your partner renders the work of the establishment so uphill as to be trick-losing; and further, good strategy often requires that there should be a tentative lead in a second suit before the first be pressed so far as to incur likelihood of an adverse ruff.

But a player should not *without good reason* jump from one suit to another; the first lead has shown the suit you propose for establishment, and if that can be promptly carried out, it is a good thing done, and simplifies and consolidates subsequent combined operations.

Moreover, in changing a suit you may cause your partner to lose a good face card to the fourth player, and should hardly bring this upon him unless you are yourself good for the following trick

in that suit, either as holding the best remaining card or as having no more and wishing to ruff.

The timely change of suits perhaps involves as great an exercise of Whist Perception as any strategical development in play. A man who doggedly goes on with a losing suit is a player without resource; he neglects opportunities. On the other hand, one who shifts a suit which has good chances of success for another of which he has no information, needlessly incurs risks.

All depends on the indications given by the fall of the cards.

* * * *

In connection with the above, it should be understood what constitutes the *combined game* when considered in its most successful developments.

It must not be inferred that it is comprised in the arrangement whereby the play of certain cards informs the partner (and the opponents) as to the others still remaining in the hand; this forms but the grounding and "setting-up drill" of the system, and would be very plain and smooth sailing except for the machinations of perceptive adversaries. Combined play signifies a great deal more than this; it means also that whilst the directive strategy should loyally be conceded to the stronger of the two hands in partnership, yet that the weaker should not always have his individuality sacrificed and merged as sometimes advocated.

Instead of complying with a call for trumps, he will often do best service by leading a singleton, for his partner should quite understand that the sole reason for not leading or returning trumps when invited must be the prospect of playing them to the best advantage by ruffing. Immediately one partner has started a strong forward game, the other should, with his supporting cards expended, generally strike the hardest blows he can by leading out his winning cards. It is sad to see how often good cards are held up by the subordinate hand only to fall in the end to the trumps or long cards of the commanding hand. Conversely, when the cards you hold are so good as to warrant you in assuming chief control, you must recognise the great responsibility which rests upon you, and understand that your own reserves must be powerful enough to withstand possible reverses and counter-attacks.

Obtaining information by a partner's discard is of high importance in a forward game; the obligation of *unblocking* has been fully dealt with in Chapter XII.

CHAPTER XVI

The Discard.

The principles which should guide it.—When to accept a Force.

IT is impossible to avoid going over a little old ground in dealing with the vexed question of *Discards.*

It is universally accepted that when trump strength is not known to be against you, your first discard should generally be made from your numerically weakest suit.

By this means you clearly direct your partner's attention to your strongest plain suit next after the one you have oiginally led (if you previously had a lead), also you get rid of a worthless card from a suit which you hope to ruff, and refrain from throwing in place of it a card in a suit which you hope to establish.

Nothing can be more sound than this; your partner, if strong in trumps, will naturally try his best to give you a chance for the ruff, and will also know the remaining plain suit wherein you can best afford assistance with strong or strengthening cards.

The discard of a small useless card in a numeri-

cally weak suit is pretty sure, if trumps are not drawn, to gain a trick by ruffing.

But the discard from a plain suit, when trumps are being drawn by the enemy, may be quite another matter.

When great trump strength is declared against, you not only perhaps play a high one falsely, to mislead the adversary as to how the remaining ones are placed, but when driven to discard in plain suits, you must similarly exercise deceptive tactics.

In the early days of Whist, the original discard from the weakest suit held good, even with adverse strength in trumps. As a high Authority has said, this had much to recommend it; it is free from any chance of misinterpretation by the partner; it usually can lose no trick in a suit generally too poor to win one; it perhaps enables a valuable long card to be held up in another suit where this holding up may prevent adverse establishment; and lastly, if trumps may not be completely drawn, it may allow of a trick being won by a ruff in the weak discard suit.

The main argument against this universal first discard from weakness is that you thereby show your poorest suit to a strong adversary.

Therefore, some authorities have recommended that with adverse strength in trumps your first discard should be from your best protected suit. But such a doctrine as that will, perhaps, not stand in Whist of the Future.

If you invariably point out to a powerful opponent your best protected suit, you may rest quite assured that he will take the fullest advantage of the information; he will either avoid leading that suit as long as possible, or else, if seated to your right, he will lead through your strong cards in it, whichever he may find to be most trick-winning.

The question arises, therefore, what rules can guide the discard on adverse trump strength being shown?

The answer is: You have superior force against you, and since you cannot cope with this in give-and-take fashion, you should mislead the enemy, and your partner should co-operate with you to this end; do not, therefore, adopt *any* regular system of discard. If you held originally four cards headed by a 10 or 9 in a suit in which an opponent has shown strength, be careful to hold up therein; it is not unlikely that he may exhaust his own trumps in order to bring in that suit, and that the holding up of your 10 or 9 may eventually spoil his game, and give you the chance of bringing in a long card or two of your own suit. Consider carefully what are the special ultimate chances for which he is playing, and hold back accordingly. You have to discard *something*, but let there be no *rule* as to whether this may be from strength or from weakness; let the only rule for guidance be, that on observation of the fall of the cards, you hold back whatever will best thwart the tactics the enemy may be attempting.

Tricks are frequently lost by a vacillating change in the discard suit. A player will sometimes hold a face card and two or three others in each of two plain suits, and in trying to protect *both* he may fail to protect *either*. This is one of the cases where Whist Perception especially comes in. You have, in holding back, to consider carefully as to which opponent will probably eventually be leader after trumps are out, and what his suit will then be.

The general rule for discarding seems to admit of formulation as follows :—

With trump strength in favour, discard from numerical weakness. With trump strength adverse, discard as guided by your Whist Perception, holding up sufficiently in the enemy's long suits.

Doubtless, however, there will always be many players who will stand up for Signalling, even when adverse trump strength is declared.

For the benefit of these I will suggest a *Rule*, as regards the first discard, which is simple and easy of application. It is this : If your first discard to adverse trump strength be an *eight* or *higher card*, this shall convey to your partner that you wish this suit led by him, as being your *best*; but if your first discard be a *seven* or lower card, you tell your partner that you have thrown from your *weakest* suit. The analogy is clear, and the deduction plain ; in your strong suit you would not generally lack the necessary spare high card, nor in your weak suit the required low card.

But *any* signalling would, under the circumstances, be a mistake. In place of it, you and your partner should, with watchful eyes on your chances, carry on Guerilla warfare and exercise Fabian tactics.

The discard of the winner in any suit, as showing the entire command in that suit, must be exercised only when the adverse trump strength is not retaining supremacy; for if you thus show your capabilities to a strong opponent, he is then able to frame his strategy in such direction as perhaps to render your advertised good cards quite worthless.

Whist authorities do not appear to have specially dealt with the issues involved in *changes* of discard suit, though they lay great stress on the importance of the partner observing the *first* discard.

But, in truth, the second and subsequent discards often supplement, in a very conclusive way, the information initiated by the original discard. When the discard suit is changed, the partner's exercise of great Whist Perception is drawn upon, for the gain or loss of the game will often depend on whether the suit he may lead later is the one of best advantage to combined tactics. Whilst, as before referred to, there must be no vacillation, yet there are often good reasons for changes in discard; for instance, it may be deemed best to attempt to keep two or three suits protected, rather than to hold up a string of good cards in one alone; or an opponent's discard may alter the situation, etc. Very high Whist

ability is shown in correct appreciation of the conditions which regulate *every* discard; and the problems often become more interesting and difficult at the later stages of the play.

At the time when discards are being made to winning cards successively led out, the casting of the losing cards is often very rapid, and there is omission carefully to note what each player throws. Guard against this inattention, for otherwise, when the leader has exhausted his commanding cards, your appreciation of the situation will be foggy when it ought to be particularly clear.

The amount of consideration you are to give to your partner's discard after trump strength is exhausted must greatly depend on the remaining components of your own hand. Under these conditions, it is a common thing for a moderate partner to think he has grave cause for complaint, as not being given his chances, if you may happen to make lead of his discard suit; but he should understand that you must, as a rule, lead from your own best suit, unless you have certain knowledge that he has good strength in any other suit.

He should recognise that his discard does not usually convey precise or positive information as to the *extent* of his strength in any suit. He has indicated *his* best suit, that is all; but the prosecution of *your own* best suit, of which the resources are more evident to you, may seem to be likely to be of the most benefit to the combined game.

When to accept a FORCE.

The subject of *Forcing* has been dealt with by *Cavendish*, *Pole*, and other leading authorities. I would propose the following definite rules as regards the trump strength, which, early in the hand, should decide *rejection or acceptance of a force.*

When holding *six* or more trumps, you should always trump an adverse winning card, unless the ruff be also with your partner, because you will still possess commanding trump strength.

With *five* trumps, or with *four* trumps, including an honour, you may pass an adverse winning card, because with this strength it is very inadvisable to diminish it ; the trump you expend would be valuable when important issues arise later, and thus early you could advantageously throw a worthless card, and give discard information, as well as clearly tell your partner that you have either five trumps, or four trumps with an honour.

By ruffing, when holding *four* trumps, you wholly sacrifice your numerical strength ; and by taking the force when having *five* trumps you seriously impair your prospects of a forward game, for you will probably shortly again be forced, and thus your power to draw trumps will be destroyed.

With *three* trumps or less, you should accept a force, or trump a doubtful trick. If your partner may have led a trump from strength or have called for trumps, you should, whatever your trump

strength may be, accept a force, and trump a doubtful trick.

Conversely to the above, it may be inferred that you must hold at least four trumps, including an honour, to warrant you in forcing your partner, unless you have information of his weakness or his wish to be forced; there is, however, the exception that when weak in trumps yourself, and with no indication from your partner, you may force him when the game seems in danger. You thus secure a necessary trick promptly, when otherwise you would lose the game should your partner prove to be weak in trumps.

As regards the rule for *forcing an opponent*, you only do this when his trump strength is too great to be otherwise advantageously drawn.

CHAPTER XVII

The Post-mortem Room.—Average time occupied in playing a hand, and a rubber.—Some notes on luck.—The cards resent grumbling at them.

IN America, when the partners have differences of opinion, squabbling and mutual recrimination at the Whist table are sometimes reserved from the edification of opponents and lookers-on by the provision of a *Post-mortem* room.

In that little room any aggrieved partner can argue anything, conclusively prove or disprove anything, or make whatever authoritative statements may be to his heart's satisfaction.

This must be a most pleasant resort; there is, I am told, an electric bell and a telephonic communication with the refreshment bar, and the amount of Whist instruction communicated in this hall of study under such favourable conditions would naturally give any club so provided a great pull over others less completely equipped. If one's partner scolds *in public*, it is always best to smile. There are smiles and smiles—a smile may mean anything. It may be sweetly evolved as conveying that one is desirous of trying to amend the error of one's ways, and of being received as a penitent into the fold again, or it may possibly sig-

nify ideas in other directions. If the scolded one may happen to be as well up in Shakespeare as he is in Whist, he might perhaps, on being reviled, bite his thumb; but when asked the question, "Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?" his reply, "I do bite my thumb, sir," would not settle the affair so pleasantly as would a judiciously practised and selected smile.

Therefore in Whist of the Future let this sweet, tacit reply to a fault-finder be the only one ever given outside the Post-mortem room.

* * * *

The time taken in playing Short Whist varies to some extent according to the procedure of those forming the table. In a club-room where the players are men who do not hesitate in delivery, nor request to look at a turned trick, I have found that the average time per rubber in a very large number of rubbers is twenty and a half minutes, and that the dealing and play of a hand takes about three minutes; this gives an average of nearly seven hands to the Short Whist Rubber.

But with those who, when their turn comes, often consider before casting their card, and sometimes refer to the last trick, etc., the average time is twenty-four and a half minutes for the Rubber, and three and a half minutes for deal and play of each Hand.

A rubber may occupy from six minutes to fifty minutes, but the shorter time quoted occurs more

frequently than the last named. The loss or gain in a Rubber averages about $5\frac{1}{2}$ Points.

To descend to minutiæ; the act of dealing takes, on an average, twenty-six seconds, being half a second for delivery of each card; the gathering up of the hands and sorting occupies about thirty-four seconds; and the play of the hand and collecting of tricks averages two minutes. Thus we arrive at the three minutes for deal and play of a hand; about eight and a half minutes for a game; and about twenty and a half minutes for a rubber.

Good Whist-players usually feel unfavourably towards lack of smartness in play. Of course, however, there should be nothing like high-pressure play or hurry, and especially there must be proper time for *counting* and arranging cards before the lead off. But after the first lead has been made, the minds of all the players should be wholly given to the table. Delay or hesitation on the part of any player upsets the train of thought of those more proficient. Nothing of that kind should therefore occur; each should play his card promptly. Those who may argue that in certain contingencies *thought involving delay* is necessary before playing may rest assured they often lose greatly by the information such hesitation conveys to the opponents.

* * * *

Many who complain of habitual *bad luck* at Whist would perhaps hail with delight the general introduction of the *Duplicate System*.

But even with that system adopted there will still be much luck attending the play of the cards. *Luck* can never be eliminated from the game. Moreover, if it were possible thus to reorganize, much of the pleasurable excitement, which is the chief charm, would be sacrificed.

There is no doubt that good or adverse luck in card-holding has sometimes very long spells. It is generally asserted that very young players are fortunate in this respect. It certainly often appears so; but perhaps experienced players have some idea that Dame Fortune ought to treat *them* with greater consideration than the beginners, and so they take special note when the favours are given to the tyros. When good luck comes to us, we are apt to think our cleverness in play is responsible for some of it; but we find it hard to couple our bad luck with probable defects in our play.

For a long time past I have taken note of any special strokes of luck. I find that I have rather recently a few times won or lost nine rubbers in succession, and that I have four times exceeded that number. The highest number of rubbers going the same way in sequence with me during many years past, has been fourteen. I have in two successive hands (July 8th, 1897) held no trump, yet we won that game on the second of the hands. I have lost five trebles in succession, and left off a loser on ten Whist evenings in succession, and have lost twenty-four out of twenty-eight consecutive rubbers. I am quite aware that none of these are record

cases of luck, and all who play Whist frequently must get similar experiences, or worse ones sometimes.

You may perhaps hold a *Yarborough* several times in a year's steady play, but in a lifetime you could not expect to receive such a hand as certified by Mr. Arthur Remington in *Whist* of July, 1897. This hand was dealt at the Olympia Club, Tacoma, Washington, U.S.A., and contained no card above a *five*. As showing the possible variations in hands, it is estimated that a pack of 52 cards can be dealt into about 635,000,000,000 different hands of thirteen cards each, and that with four players playing 49 deals every night in the year, it would be about 40,000,000 years before the even chance came round that all four would hold precisely the same hands a second time.

Pembridge considers that his luck—whichever way it may be going—has spells of five years.

Five years of Whist adversity must be monotonous; yet I believe there are players who have even gone through a Whist lifetime of thirty or forty years without bright intervals of considerable length; and on the other hand there are men who almost always command more than their share of good luck. Take a shilling, or the oft-quoted penny, and toss it twenty times or five hundred times, and you won't find heads and tails at all counterbalance. In the earlier cricket matches of 1896, the Australian cricketers, in the toss for choice of innings, won eleven times out of fourteen, and where sides are

pretty evenly balanced in skill, there is about as much luck also in the *play* of a cricket match as there would be in the play of a Duplicate Whist Match.

In the lottery of life's successes and failures we often see how luck brings success to some man of no special qualifications, whilst others far more talented and worthy are not given their chances.

But let those who are *unlucky* take comfort. There is pretty surely a turning point ahead at some time. Moreover, it is asserted—and I believe in this thoroughly—that with bad luck at cards there will certainly be, as a set-off, good luck in home affairs, and personally I have rather found issues to go *vice versâ* also.

Grumbling at adverse luck is bad form, and meets with but superficial sympathy from by-standers, or those who have won the day. A very sound old Whist-player of the time of my youth, Dr. Arthur Lamb, who looked on dissent from Hoyle and Matthews as rank heresy, always proclaimed that the cards resented grumbling, and would never treat a grumbler so generously as they would treat one who, under reverses, said nothing.

It is certainly sometimes a little bit hard when the cards are persistently poor to deny one's self verbal relief; but Whist is a great school of self-restraint. Pull yourself together as regards this matter, just as in the case of the *bad habits* referred to in Chapter III., and keep incipient grumbling and fault-finding tightly corked down.

CHAPTER XVIII

Whist matches by telegraphic correspondence.—International Whist Tournaments.—The Attacks on American Leads.

WHIST matches must, in order to be of any service as determining the skill of the sides, be on the *Duplicate System*, the same hands being changed over from one side to the other in such a manner that no benefit can arrive to the players from former experience of any hand when it is played for the second time: with care and method this arrangement is not difficult.

A Whist match by correspondence, even though the telegraph be used, is not at all the same thing as a match played by four persons seated at a table. Play by correspondence gives undue time for thinking and for calculating as regards remote possibilities. The highest qualification of the finest Whist-player is *ability to arrive instantaneously at accurate deductions.* No man who is obliged to consider awhile before playing each card is a good Whist-player, though possibly a few thinkers might come out fairly in a correspondence match.

International matches cannot therefore be

carried out in any other way than by teams exchanging visits, just as the cricket teams of England and Australia have done.

The Daily Evening Telegraph of Philadelphia, U.S.A., does but echo the wish of many on this side of the Atlantic when stating, "In Whist circles all over the country the question of a Whist match with England is talked of and longed for."

Such a match would be most interesting, and the published play of the hands would be read by Whist-players innumerable, and do much for improvement in skill. Where one Englishman will study the Chess games published in our newspapers, there might be fifty who would advantageously work out the play of a Whist hand by champion national players and the authoritative comments thereupon.

Of course neither side must have any signal nor convention which is not openly declared and specified. We must not take against the Americans, nor must they bring against us any trump-showing, three-echoing, etc., conventions except these be announced in good time beforehand and fully described on the walls of the match room.

English players have nothing whatever to fear from usage by opponents of all sorts of conventions, provided they know *what each convention is understood to convey*; they would then thankfully take all the signalled information in, and make full use of it in their own less demonstrative strategy.

It may be observed that some American Whist authorities are not pleased with the continual progressive suggestions for signalling.

The *Brooklyn Eagle* says:—

"There seems to be at the present time an irrepressible craze for a new system superior to that which time and experience have shown to be the best. Almost every player has some pet idea which he thinks, if adopted, would vanquish all adversaries, and the result is that when one sits down to the table, unless he has a long and intimate acquaintance with both partner and adversaries, he is a participant in a guessing match from start to finish. The play is highly interesting, and is a most beautiful game, but it is not Whist. Meantime those who keep their heads clear and play the common-sense game, the result of experience, will come out winners in the end."

That is true, and when signallers see that the signals they are allowed to use are often but so many advantages conceded to vigilant opponents, they will abandon the practice as being trick-losing.

The Americans consider that our great English authority, *Cavendish*, has adopted their leads, and Cavendish himself says in his fourth edition of *Whist Development:* "The great majority of thoughtful players are, after a lapse of six or seven years, in favour of these leads."

But will there not be sweeping modifications when the *attacks* to which these leads are peculiarly and specially open have been correspondingly studied and developed? The American Leads and Signals came to us as a new thing. When employed by partners who understood them, and *also* understood

the old system of leads, *against opponents who comprehended the latter only*, it is manifest that the last named would naturally get the worst of it. Thus it arose that many of our good players, finding that they were beaten by those who understood and promptly adopted the American Leads, arrived at the conclusion that the American system must be superior to ours. They then set to work to master the new system, and employed it against fellow-countrymen who had not as yet done so, and in their turn found the result satisfactory; of course, too, when playing against others who had adopted it, they were on equal terms, and could perceive no disadvantageous results from use of it.

But the results would be very different if our best players had contented themselves with thoroughly mastering the system with a view, when playing against those adopting it, of using aggressively the information conceded, but with no intention of usually giving the enemy like details in return.

I can therefore but repeat that the key to assault and conquest of American Leads is: thoroughly to master them so as to be able to attack them in their most vulnerable point, viz., number-showing details, and, *unless very strong*, to reserve anything like open publication of your own hand, until you find how far this action will help your combined game.

In self-defence, and on account of the beautiful precision of them, the study of American Leads and Signals has become a necessity; but the extensive use of these will, I believe, in Whist of the Future,

only be found beneficial against players less perfectly acquainted with them, or who have entirely neglected to master them, or in cases where there is in the combined hands sufficient strength to ensure the success of long cards.

If the American Leads and Signals were likely to constitute permanently the foundation of Whist tactics of the future, the Americans would doubtless soon show themselves as clever in attack as they have proved fertile and shrewd in invention, and we should have books published giving details as to the defensive play, false play, and counter-attack, which would be advantageous to the second and fourth hands.

Indeed, in the published play of the hands dealt in Whist Matches, it is most interesting to note how the orthodox American Leads are often departed from, the reason undoubtedly being that they are too informatory, or that they are not trick-winning under certain conditions.

In Whist, just as in Warfare, the Attack on the enemy's selected and occupied positions will generally prove superior to the Defence. The fine French army, narrowed within strongholds, stood no chance when the Germans, having knowledge of their resources, could choose time and method for assault; the analogy as regards Whist Strategy is close. With the enemy's strength declared by their own leads and signals, and their comparatively unalterable positions defined and known, the mobile, well-informed opposing force will stand at advantage.

CHAPTER XIX

Whist problems.—On Specimen hands.—A dealing machine.—Concluding observations.—Appendix giving solutions of problems.

THE solution of Whist problems nearly always hinges on either specially forcing an opponent's discard, or on casting from one's own or the partner's hand a card that would otherwise take the lead at a later stage when this might stand in the way.

The problems given in English treatises on the game are very few indeed. *Cavendish*, however, has illustrated most types of endings of hands in his valuable work *Whist Perception*. The *Vienna Coup*, as cited by James Clay, was for some years almost the only example propounded for solution; it is not difficult, and involves the dealing of the whole pack.

The Americans are extremely clever in the invention of Whist problems and of hands illustrative of interesting cases, but our own *Cavendish* has done far more than any other Whist authority in the world to give instruction by means of specimen hands.

I will now append two Whist problems. No. 1 is not very hard to find out. It came to me from

an officer of a Highland regiment stationed in Ceylon a few years ago. He could not, however, then tell me anything as to the authorship; but from what I have since gathered, it is very similar to one previously invented by Mr. Whitfeld.

No. 2 is also by W. H. Whitfeld, Esq., M.A., of Cambridge University. He has most courteously given me permission to insert it. Those who endeavour to solve it will greatly appreciate the constructive ingenuity. I believe that no Whist problem of superior merit has ever been published. Both of these are double Dummy problems, and the cards of all the hands are therefore duly laid on the table.

I have at the end of the book given the solutions, but readers are invited to find these out for themselves, for if they prematurely look at the answers, they will derive no real benefit to their Whist perceptive powers.

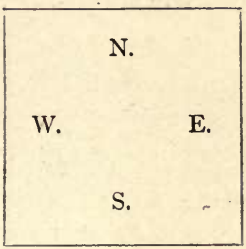
WHIST PROBLEM No. 1.

Hearts trumps—S. to lead and N. and S. to win every trick.

H.– 3. 2. (trumps).

D.– J. 2.

C.–A. 2.



D.– Q. 5.

C.– Q. J.

S.– A. Q.

D.– 10. 8. 7.

C.– K.

S.– K. J.

D.– A. K. 9.

C.– 10.

S.– 3. 2.

WHIST PROBLEM No. 2.

By W. H. Whitfeld, Esq., M.A.

Spades trumps.—S to lead and N. and S. to win every trick.

S.– J. 10. 6. 3.
C.– 7. 4.
D.– 8. 2.

	N.	
H.– K.		**H.**–Q. 10. 5. 4.
C.– K. J. 8. 2.	W. E.	**C.**–Q. 10.
D.– Q. J. 9.		**D.**–10. 7.
	S.	

H.– A. J. 9. 7.
C.– A. 3.
D.– K. 6.

SPECIMEN HANDS.

Specimen hands are of great service to young players, and may also be of much use to illustrate special points or exceptional cases; but unfortunately they occupy a large amount of space in a book. There is also the great drawback that you can frame and adjust these hands so as to make them give any result you desire. It would be no difficult matter for me to include specimen hands illustrating how utterly the number-showing American Leads may bring about the discomfiture of those using them; but it is more satisfactory to let the proof of this stand for practical test by play at the table.

A striking feature in the result of play of haphazard hands is the success of the singleton lead if made immediately it is found that the attempt at the long-suit establishment is probably hopeless or trick-losing.

* * * *

The Americans have shown high ingenuity in arrangements for carrying out Duplicate and Progressive Whist; but no advertisement has yet appeared of a Shuffling and Dealing Machine which could be universally accepted. Such a machine would be a boon, for there are many who are not expert at dealing. Of course it must be perfect in its working. It would either revolve the pack, delivering a card at four equidistant points in

a revolution, or the card-chucker might be stationary, and the receiving tray revolve once for four chucks. Perhaps cards might have to be slightly modified in form or make to suit with accuracy the mechanism of the chucker; the turning up of the fifty-second or trump card could be timed for without much difficulty.

A good *Whist Recorder*, which would register cards as they are played, is also wanted; it might be worked on the principle of the typewriter, but possibly some almost automatic arrangement may be forthcoming.

* * * *

Whilst fully submitting my reasons for believing that the unqualified adoption of American Leads will never hold permanently, I desire heartily to admit that adherence to these Leads, *together with a like adherence to the same system by opponents*, constitutes a game most gentlemanlike in character and most intellectual in developments.

Whist Instruction based on the American Leads will undoubtedly long hold a foremost place as best presenting the high-class game to the student. With a thorough grounding in these Leads, he will be taught to observe closely and to deduce accurately; and this classic training will prepare him for the time when his matured perception will in turn enable him to combat the leads with vigour and success.

In actual play it would not be reasonable nor

possible to deny the use of artifices begotten of adverse informatory leads. Moreover, the average English Whist-player would hardly be able consistently to interpret and follow out to advantage all that is sought to be conveyed by the remote number-showing leads of a partner.

Perhaps a new system of play will be the outcome of those which now exist: it may be a compromise. It may have the simple old leads as the opening ones of the hand, because these contain no excess of information which would invite and involve disaster when the combined hands might turn out to be weak. It may also embody the main principle of American Leads (*viz.*, *to show the strength and length of a suit to the utmost*), for use *only* at the stage of the play when the combined strength has been ascertained to be sufficient to give prospect of long suit establishment and *bringing in.*

I feel sure that all Whist-players will be with me in hoping that an International Congress may be assembled to decide on a form of game that would be accepted universally, and to overhaul and adjust existing Whist Laws. If anything I have submitted may be of service to that end, I shall be gratified and content.

APPENDIX

SOLUTION TO WHIST PROBLEM No. 1.

The winning card of the trick is underlined.

No. of Trick.	North.				East.				South.				West.			
	S	H	C	D	S	H	C	D	S	H	C	D	S	H	C	D
1				J				7				K				5
2		2			J				3				Q			
3		3					K				10		A			
4			A		K							9			J	
5				2				8				A				Q
6			2					10	2						Q	

It will be seen that at trick No. 4, S. discards the 9 D. or 2 S. according as W. has discarded S. or D. in trick No. 3.

The key to the solution of the problem is the throwing by N. of the J of Diamonds to the first trick.

SOLUTION OF WHIST PROBLEM No. 2.

The winning card of the trick is underlined.

No. of Trick.	North.				East.				South.				West.			
	S	H	C	D	S	H	C	D	S	H	C	D	S	H	C	D
1	3					4				7				K		
2	J						?10				3				2	
3			4				Q				A				8	
4				2		5			A						J	
5	6					10				9						9
6	10							?7		J						?J
7				8				10				K				Q
8			7			Q						6			K	

If at trick No. 2, E. discards a Diamond, S. will also discard a diamond; the play will then be similar to the above, Diamonds and Clubs being

interchanged. If E. discards a Heart, obviously S. will make a trick in Hearts.

If at trick 6 E. discards the Queen of Hearts, S. will make the Jack of Hearts; if W. discards the King of Clubs, N. makes the 7 of Clubs.

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